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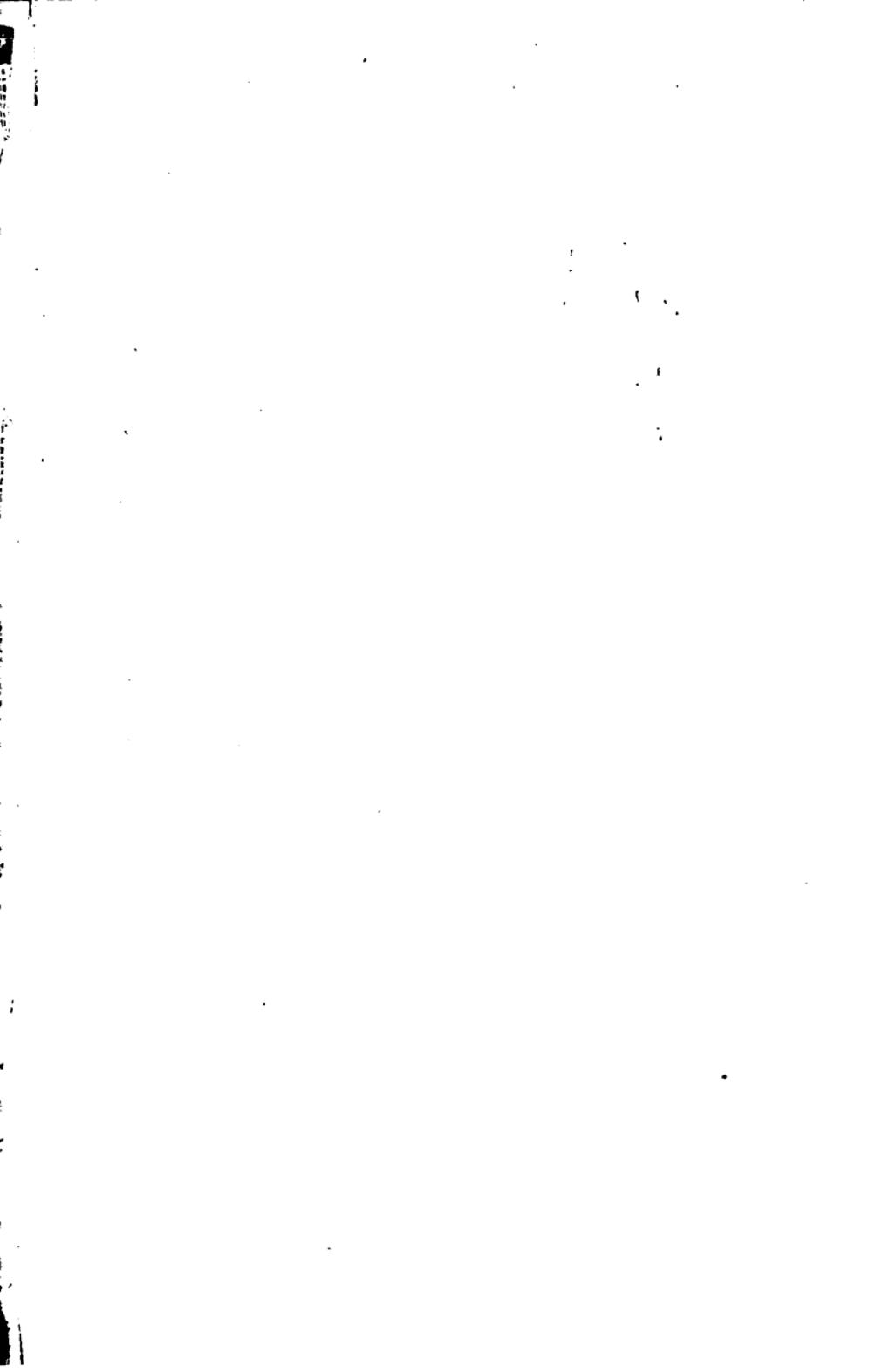
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*PAST*  
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**STATUE OF KING ALFRED.**

[*Tom Reveley, Wantage.*

*Inscribed thus :*

'Alfred found learning dead,  
And he restored it;  
Education neglected,  
And he revived it;

The laws powerless,  
And he gave them force;  
The Church debased,  
And he raised it;  
The land ravaged by a fearful enemy,  
From which he delivered it.

# THE AMERICAN

MISS GRIMKES

BY MARY E. ST.

IN OLD WASHINGTON,

BY ROBERT COLEMAN,

BY VICTORIA,

BY JAMES,

BY JOHN,

BY ROBERT COLEMAN,



# WANTAGE PAST AND PRESENT

BY

AGNES GIBBONS

AND

E. C. DAVEY, F.G.S.,

WITH A PREFACE BY

THE RIGHT HON. LORD WANTAGE, V.C., K.C.B.,

TO WHOSE HONOURED MEMORY

THE VOLUME IS

DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHORS.

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LONDON :

WILLIAM WALKER,

28, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

WANTAGE :

H. N. NICHOLS, MARKET PLACE.

1901.

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## P R E F A C E .

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It has given me much pleasure to accept the Dedication of this History of the ancient Town with which I am connected by ties of neighbourhood and interest.

It has been a labour of love to Miss Gibbons to gather together a mass of valuable information, and to shape it skilfully into a series of pictures of Wantage in the past and in the present.

Our late revered Bishop and great historian, Bishop Stubbs, has said, "a very great many persons can find in the following up of local and personal history a connection with the greater streams of social and political history that is full of direct interest."

Wantage has kept in close touch with those "greater streams" since the days when Roman soldiers spoke Latin in her streets, when later on Danes and Saxons, and in more recent times the troops of the King and of Cromwell fought over the now peaceful Downs, amid whose folds the little Town lies hidden.

Wantage is the Birth-place of our greatest King ; one of England's greatest Theologians was also born there, and in recent days another Butler has made Wantage a noted centre of educational and Church work. But there was a time in the last century in the years following the Reform Bill of 1832, when the old Saxon town seemed likely to fall

into insignificance. The fortunes that had been made in wheat (with a rapidity that may compare to those since made in gold) crumbled, leaving their owners impoverished and reduced to a low level.

This downfall of agricultural prosperity among farmers, naturally affected also the prosperity of the central town of a large agricultural district, whose chief business turned upon dealing and trafficking in the greatest commodities of that period, namely wheat and wool. Fortunately a movement arose among enterprising men to bring commercial business to Wantage, and the father of the author of this book, following Mr. Chas. Hart, devoted his life to developing at the Iron Works an industry that has contributed to restore prosperity to the town. After passing through other hands, it has now devolved upon me to do my best to promote the usefulness of the Works.

I trust that in the future Wantage may maintain the traditions of her historic past, and that great names and good deeds may continue to add lustre to her annals.

#### WANTAGE.

Lockinge, May, 1901.

THE Authors of this little work desire to express their most grateful thanks to all those many kind friends who have so generously helped them in compiling it, by placing at their disposal much valuable information without which it would have been impossible for them to complete their task.

Old inhabitants of the town, friends at a distance with any information bearing upon the subject, all have freely helped, and all are entitled to grateful recognition. We desire to thank them heartily for their assistance, and we now offer our History of Wantage as a humble contribution towards a better knowledge of the past.

## CONTENTS.

---

### CHAPTER I.

WANTAGE IN PREHISTORIC TIMES . . . . .	PAGE I
--	-----------

### CHAPTER II.

THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD . . . . .	15
----------------------------------	----

### CHAPTER III.

NORMAN AND MEDIEVAL PERIOD . . . . .	37
--------------------------------------	----

### CHAPTER IV.

THE STUART PERIOD . . . . .	71
-----------------------------	----

### CHAPTER V.

WANTAGE UP TO THE PRESENT DAY . . . . .	88
---	----

### CHAPTER VI.

WANTAGE CHURCH HISTORY . . . . .	105
----------------------------------	-----

### CHAPTER VII.

THE CHARITIES OF WANTAGE . . . . .	145
------------------------------------	-----

### CHAPTER VIII.

LIST OF THE GOVERNORS OF THE WANTAGE TOWN LANDS . . . . .	166
---	-----

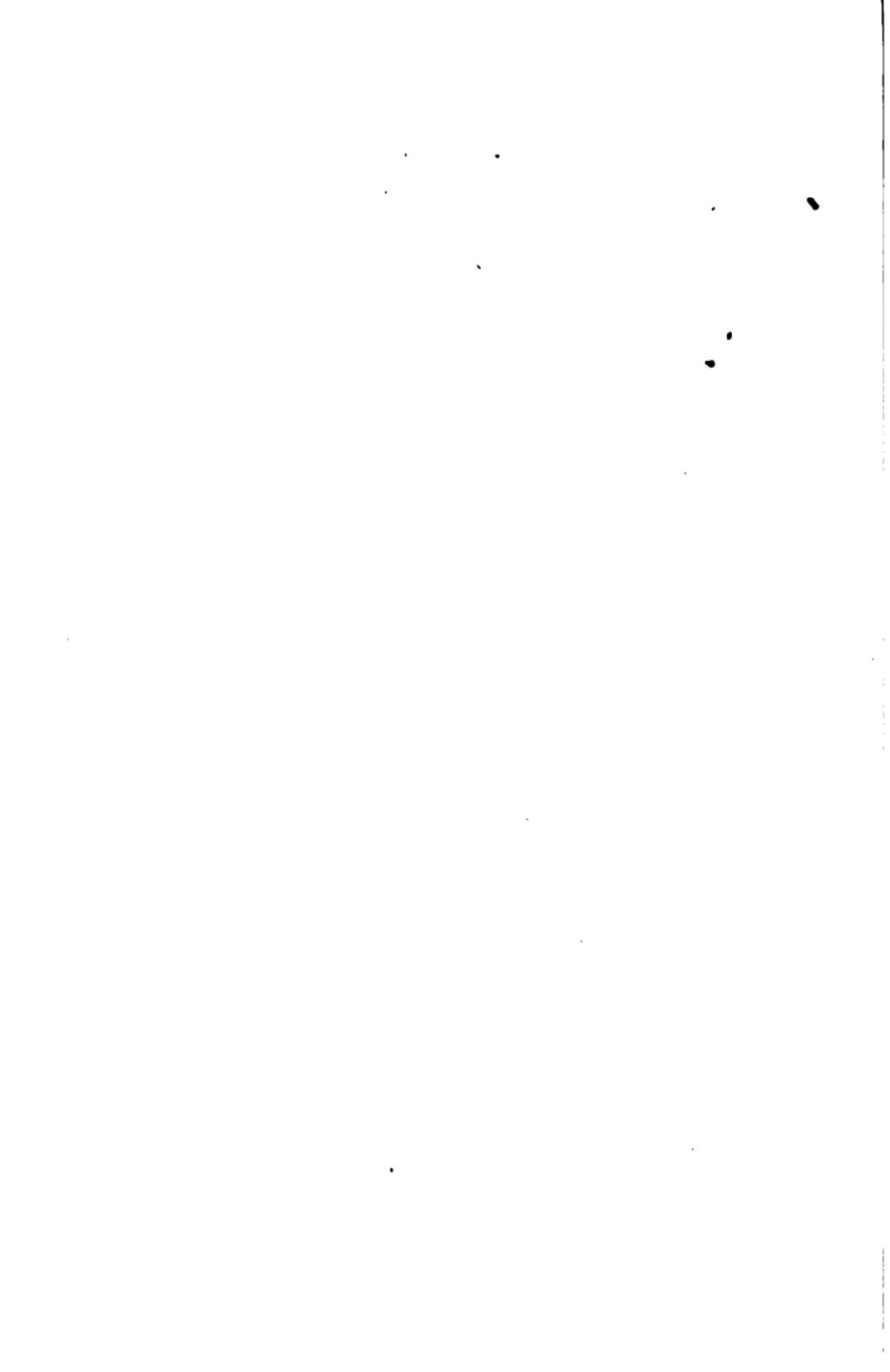
### CHAPTER IX.

THE GEOLOGY OF WANTAGE . . . . .	197
----------------------------------	-----

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

---

	PAGE
STATUE OF KING ALFRED . . . . .	<i>frontispiece</i>
WAYLAND SMITH'S CAVE . . . . .	6
ROMAN POTTERY . . . . .	10
WHITE HORSE HILL . . . . .	20
JEWELS . . . . .	22
SEALS . . . . .	62
BISHOP BUTLER . . . . .	82
TOKENS . . . . .	84
OLD MARKET PLACE . . . . .	88
NEW MARKET PLACE . . . . .	100
OLD CHURCH . . . . .	104
NEW CHURCH . . . . .	108
ST. MARY'S HOME . . . . .	136
DEAN BUTLER . . . . .	188
LORD WANTAGE . . . . .	190



# WANTAGE

## PAST AND PRESENT.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### WANTAGE IN PREHISTORIC TIMES.

WANTAGE, like a hundred more old towns and villages in England, has no place in history until we are far advanced in Anglo-Saxon rule. Yet there is no doubt that one or more Celtic tribes had occupied the entire district a thousand years before Wantage comes to be first mentioned in the pages of Asser, the contemporary biographer of Alfred the Great. Wherever our Celtic aborigines could find a combination of water, pasture land, hills and woods, there they were sure to establish themselves, and we have a variety of evidences to show that this district was occupied at a very early period, being provided

by nature with all that the dim and forgotten forefathers of our race desired for the two essentials of subsistence and defence.

The evidences are earthworks; old roads skirting the Downs, once mere tracks for men and animals; flint and bronze implements, pottery, relics of heathen worship and coins.

1. Of earthworks the most notable in immediate connection with Wantage is Sagbury Camp, or Letcombe "castle," as it is generally called. It is not of Saxon or Danish origin, because memorials of Celtic worship were found *within* its enclosure by Mr. Phené, F.S.A., in 1871. It is still less Roman, because according to Professor Phillips "no circular camp is Roman" (Rivers, &c., of Yorkshire, 219, 244). Sagbury Camp forms an irregular circle, extending about 515 yards from north to south, and 480 from east to west. Its area is about 26 acres, exclusive of mound and trench, which may be estimated as covering eight or nine acres.\*

At Letcombe "castle" begins a fosse, which may be traced for many miles to the east above Betterton and Gingy towards Aldworth. Its origin is lost in the obscurity of ages. The best conjecture is that it was intended for the boundary of the 3,000 hides of land given to Cuthred, the son of Cwichelm (whence Cuckhamsley) in 648. (Ang. Sax. Chron. ad ann.)

---

\* "Il faut reconnaître que ces camps sont beaucoup plus vieux qu'on ne le croit généralement. Les Romains, non plus que nous, n'en connaissaient l'origine. Les Romains les modifièrent, les agrandirent, mais ils ne les fondèrent pas."

—Boucher de Perthes, Antiq. Celt. II. 383.

2. Of old roads the Icknield,\* or Ickleton way is the most ancient. Its passage through Wantage and Berkshire is but a link in a long chain; for its commencement is near Icklingham in Suffolk, and its termination at Avebury, or possibly at Stonehenge and Old Sarum. (Dr. Guest, *Archæological Journal*, No. 54, p. 117.)

After leaving Wantage the Ickleton way, which now takes in parts the name of Portway, made direct for Lockinge, then by Ginge brook in Ardington parish to West Hendred, and the outskirts of East Hendred and Harwell to Hagbourne, Upton, Blewbury, and Streatley. Its exact line was traced with difficulty a hundred years ago, when Messrs. Lysons were describing it. Since then it has been ploughed up in many parts and is lost beyond recovery. (Lysons *Brit.* 202, n. Hewett's Hund. of Compton, 115).

It is mentioned in the following charters:

A.D. 757, at Ashbury.

Rex offa sibi usurpavit omnia quæ jurisdictione (Kineulfi)

---

\* "Along the base of the slopes (of the Berkshire Downs) ran one of the earliest lines of British communication. Its name of Icknield way connects this road with the Iceni, whom the Romans found settled in our Norfolk and Suffolk. Seldom climbing to the crest of the Down, and equally avoiding its deep bottoms, its course recalls a time when the wayfarer shrank equally from the dangers of the open country, and from the thickets and marshes which made the lower grounds all but impassable. The road long remained one of the main thoroughfares of the island; pilgrims from the west traversed it throughout the middle ages, on their way to the shrine of St. Edmund at Bury; and but two centuries ago lines of pack-horses carried along it bales of woollen goods from the manufacturing towns of the eastern counties."

—Green, *The Making of England*, 121-122.

subdita fuerant ab oppido Walingfordiæ ab Ichenhildestrete usque ad Esseburiam.—Chron. Mon. de Abing. I. 14.

A.D. 901, at Hardwell (formerly Hordwell).

Ærest on Swinbroc, thæt up of Swinebroce in on ricslæd, of thæs riscsbædes byge ongean Hordwylles weg, thæt andlang thæs weges oth hit cymth to Icenhilde wege.—I. 57.

A.D. 955, at Compton Beauchamp.

This sind thæs landes gemære æt Cumtune: on forwerde dune of Æthelmes Hlince on Icenhilde wege.

—I. 158, Cod. Dipl. v. 332.

A.D. 944, at Blewbury.

This sindon tha land gemæro to Bleobyrig. Of Hafuc thorne to than langan thorne æt Ichenilde wege.

—Chron. de Abing. I. iii. ; Cod. Dipl. v. 295.

Another ancient road is the Ridgeway, a broad grassy track running along the northern summit of the Berkshire Downs. Its whole course is one of unusual interest; for, from beginning to end, scarcely a mile is traversed without meeting with venerable camps, barrows and battle sites. The most conspicuous objects on the route are Wayland Smith's Cave or Wælalandes Smithy, as it is called in an Anglo-Saxon charter of the 9th century, familiar to all readers of "Kenilworth;" Uffington "Castle;"\* the effigy of the White Horse, a work formerly attributed to Alfred the Great on his victory over the Danes in 871, but now believed to be of a much earlier date; Childrey barrows, Sagbury Camp, and Cutchamsley Knob, which such an

\* The Cromlech (Wayland Smith's cave) and Uffington Castle were the only two objects in Berks scheduled by Sir John Lubbock in his Bill for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments. (1877).

authority as Kemble adjudged to be "probably the most commanding barrow in England." (*Arch. Journ.* for 1857, p. 131). At Wanborough, where the Ridgeway joins the Ickleton way, a battle of considerable importance in English history was fought in 591. (Green, *ut supr.* 208).

3. Of bronze implements four "celts" were unearthed in 1872 on Latton Down, in the parish of Farnborough. They were all of different patterns, but all about five inches in length, of nearly equal weight and patinated. They belong to the form usually known as "Palstave." They were purchased by Canon Greenwell, F.R.S., and are in the British Museum. A celt of same type, was found near Wallingford in 1844, and is described by Professor Phillips. (*Geol. of Oxford*, 479).

Of flint and stone implements many specimens have been found in rifled barrows above Letcombe Bassett, and Childrey and more abundantly about Lambourn, Compton, Peasemore, and Ilsley. Among the discoveries may be mentioned a flint scraper, "a beautifully formed barbed arrow point of flint," and an axe hammer, "one of the finest ever seen." With the arrow heads and hammers that are found in burial mounds are associated entire or broken specimens of ornamented pottery. The accompanying photograph represents a group of vessels dug up north of Wantage in 1876. For further particulars of flint implements found in the neighbourhood of Wantage, consult Sir John Evans's "*Ancient Stone Implements*," vi. 114; xii. 278; xiii. 285; xv. 312; xvi. 343; xxi. 408; also vi. 100 and xvi. 347.

4. Of objects connected with Druidical worship none is so remarkable as the altar stone found by Mr. J. S. Phené, F.S.A., in 1871 inside Letcombe "castle." By accident,

the eminent archaeologist noticed the apex of this stone projecting from the earth of the inner side of the mound. Removing the earth in which the stone was imbedded, he found it to be an "almost perfect cone," 18 inches in height. It was standing on five or six large flints, and beneath them was a cist or chamber, the walls of which were formed by flints, and the floor by a flat slab of stone. In this cavity were human bones, some flint scrapers, half of a hatchet-shaped flint, and a fragment of an urn or a drinking cup. Assuming the camp to be British, and its occupants worshippers of the sun, this conical stone surmounting the cist may have been an altar, beneath which was a rude reliquary, containing the bones and weapons of some former leader in battle.

Much interest may be attached even to a block of stone, when we learn that it was a recognised symbol of divinity in the religion of our earliest ancestors. "We know," says Sir John Lubbock, "that in many countries Baal, the god of the Phenicians, was worshipped under the form of a conical stone." (*Prehistoric Times*, iii. 71). In a similar manner Sir John Evans informs us that the Paphian Venus appears in the form of a conical stone, on coins struck in Cyprus. (*Anc. Stone Imp.* i. 9). And the student of Roman history will readily recall the excesses of the infamous Elagabalus, in connection with a black conical stone brought from Emesa to Rome with extraordinary ceremony.

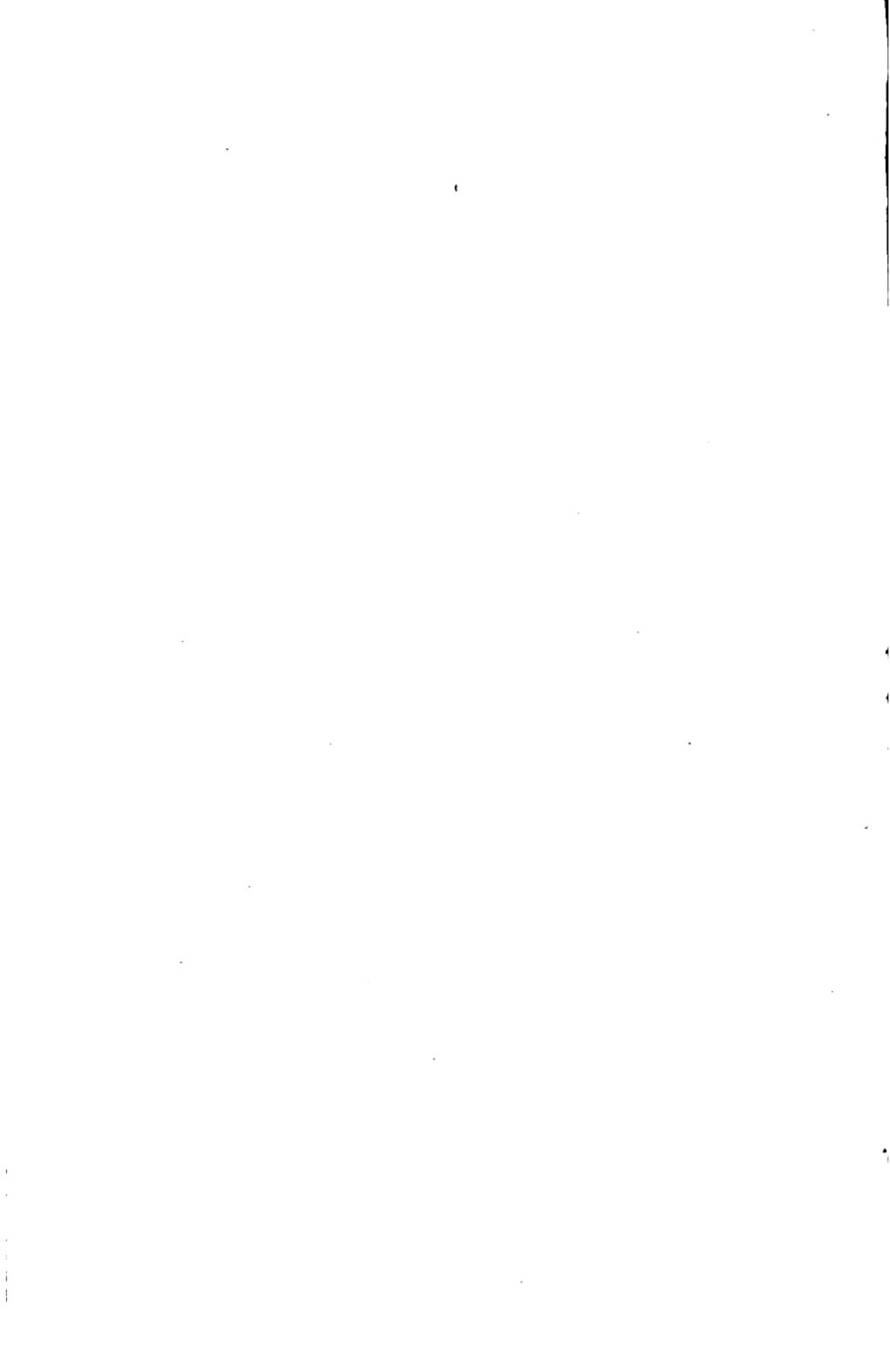
The discovery in Letcombe "castle" was repeated in Scotland by the same Mr. Phené, when excavating a chambered tumulus on the estate of the Duke of Argyll, near Inverary.



*Photo by*

WAYLAND SMITH'S CAVE.

[*Tom Roltley, Wantage.*



Only five years previous to Mr. Phené's discoveries in England and Scotland, an altar stone of much the same character and size (22 inches in height) was unearthed at a spot a thousand miles away to the south, namely at Antibes on the Mediterranean, between Cannes and Nice. Its discovery gave rise to many learned pamphlets and discussions, for the stone was admitted to be "one of the most interesting monuments of the antiquities of Provence." (Lenthéric's Riviera, viii. 391, 397).

In Anglo-Saxon charters of the 9th century, defining boundaries of lands given to monasteries, constant mention occurs of stones singly, or heaped up so as to form a cairn. A row of stones is specified at Hordwell (Chron. Mon. Ab. I. 58) and there are apparent remnants still to be seen near Knighton farm; cairns at Bicanstapole and Chieveley (17, 153); a burning stone (brandan stan) at Brightwalton (86). This Dr. Stevenson thinks may have been a "stone of cremation." Pillars, or columns are alluded to in other charters (17, 228). But the most imposing, enduring and attractive stone relic of antiquity in the neighbourhood, is undoubtedly Wayland Smith's Cave, a Cromlech which belongs to the dim age of Stonehenge, Avebury, Stanton Drew near Bath, and Kits Coty House in Kent.

Bishop Gibson, in his additions to Camden's "Britannia," is the first writer to describe the Cromlech, although he does not mention it by name, but the following sentences clearly refer to it: "About a mile from the (White Horse) hill there are a great many large stones, which though very confused must yet have been laid there on purpose. Some of them are placed edgewise, but the rest are so disorderly that one would imagine they had been tumbled out of a

cart." (151). Their appearance in 1695 closely agrees with their present state. Dr. Wise's report is as follows : "On the east side of the southern extremity stand three square flat stones, of about four or five feet over each way, set on edge and supporting a fourth of much larger dimensions, lying flat upon them. These altogether form a cavern or sheltering place, resembling pretty exactly those described by Wormius, Bartholine, and others."

The largest of the stones composing the "forge" or "cave" is 10 feet long and 8 feet 8 inches broad. Another one (detached) measures 11 feet long by 6 feet 4 inches broad. The entire number of stones forming the Cromlech or scattered about is 30. They are all "sarsens," that is, hardened sandstones, not conglomerate, as at Stanton Harcourt; nor fossiliferous, as Professor Phillips reports some at Stonehenge to be. (Geol. of Oxf. 447). There is a very similar Cromlech at Llanglydwen, on the Taff, between Whitland Junction and Crymmych Arms, Pembrokeshire.

#### THE BLOWING STONE

Formerly stood on the Ridgeway, near Uffington Camp and was brought down to its present position by E. M. Atkins, Esq., of Kingstone Lisle. Some have supposed that this curious stone is referred to in a charter of King Athelstan, under the name of Tædduces stone or the *dyrne stan* (Ab. Chron. I. 71). But the context mentions "rushy bed" and "mill stream" in connection with the *dyrne stan*, showing it was *below* the hill range in the meadows. (*Dyrn* means secret, hidden, perhaps mysterious. The word *derne* occurs in Piers Plowman, ii. 175, and in Chaucer, Miller's Tale, l. 14).

The antiquaries of the 17th and 18th centuries seem not

to have noticed this stone. No allusion to it can be found in Gibson's, or Gough's editions of Camden's Britannia; none in the writings of Stukeley, Hearne or Wise. It is not until the beginning of the 19th century, that the first description of its peculiarities appear, and this was published in the "Transactions of the Linnean Society" for November 7, 1809, as follows:—

"The Blowing Stone is placed near the front of a public house to which it gives its name. It is an unwrought sand-stone, about three feet high, three feet wide, and nearly eighteen inches in thickness, having natural perforations. One of these perforations begins at the upper end on the left side and passes to the other side a little lower down. It is 18 inches in length, about an inch in diameter at the upper end, and nearly 2 inches at the lower, thus forming a tube like a horn, and when filled with wind sounds like one, and may be heard at a considerable distance. Any one used to blowing a horn can sound it. Mr. Sowerby has not been able to determine whether these perforations were caused by roots of trees or by an animal, but he concludes that they have been formed in the same manner as those observed on some of the sandstones found on Marlborough Downs." (Vol. x. 405).

Sarsen stones with similar perforations are not uncommon beneath our chalk range, in particular at Woolstone and East Hendred, and in the same way Professor Phillips states that the large, irregular blocks of stone on the Chiltern hills are often "cavernous." (Geol. of Oxf. 449).

5. Early British coins are of course rare when compared with the quantities of Roman coins almost daily discovered. But Berkshire in general, and Wantage in particular have

yielded a fair quota of British gold coins, both uninscribed and inscribed. Of the uninscribed Sir John Evans enumerates eight from Letcombe Regis, Hampstead Norris, Wittenham, and other parts of the county, and the late Mr. Davies of Wallingford was at one time the possessor of sixteen more. Of inscribed, the immediate neighbourhood of Wantage has produced some perfect specimens of Tasciovanus, Cunobeline, Tincommius, and Bodvoc. Mr. Davies had also four gold and three silver coins of these early British princes.

It is a pleasure to be able to add a report of the latest old British coin found close to Wantage, which was exhibited before the Numismatic Society of London, February 21, 1901. It is thus described in the *Num. Circ.* for April, 1901: "A small silver coin of the British chief Verica, found near Challow. It has on the obverse a laureate head, similar to that on the coins of Tiberius, with the legend *VERIC*, and on the reverse *C. F. (Commii Filius)* within a torque. This coin is of some importance as helping to fix the date of the reign of Verica" (p. 4572).

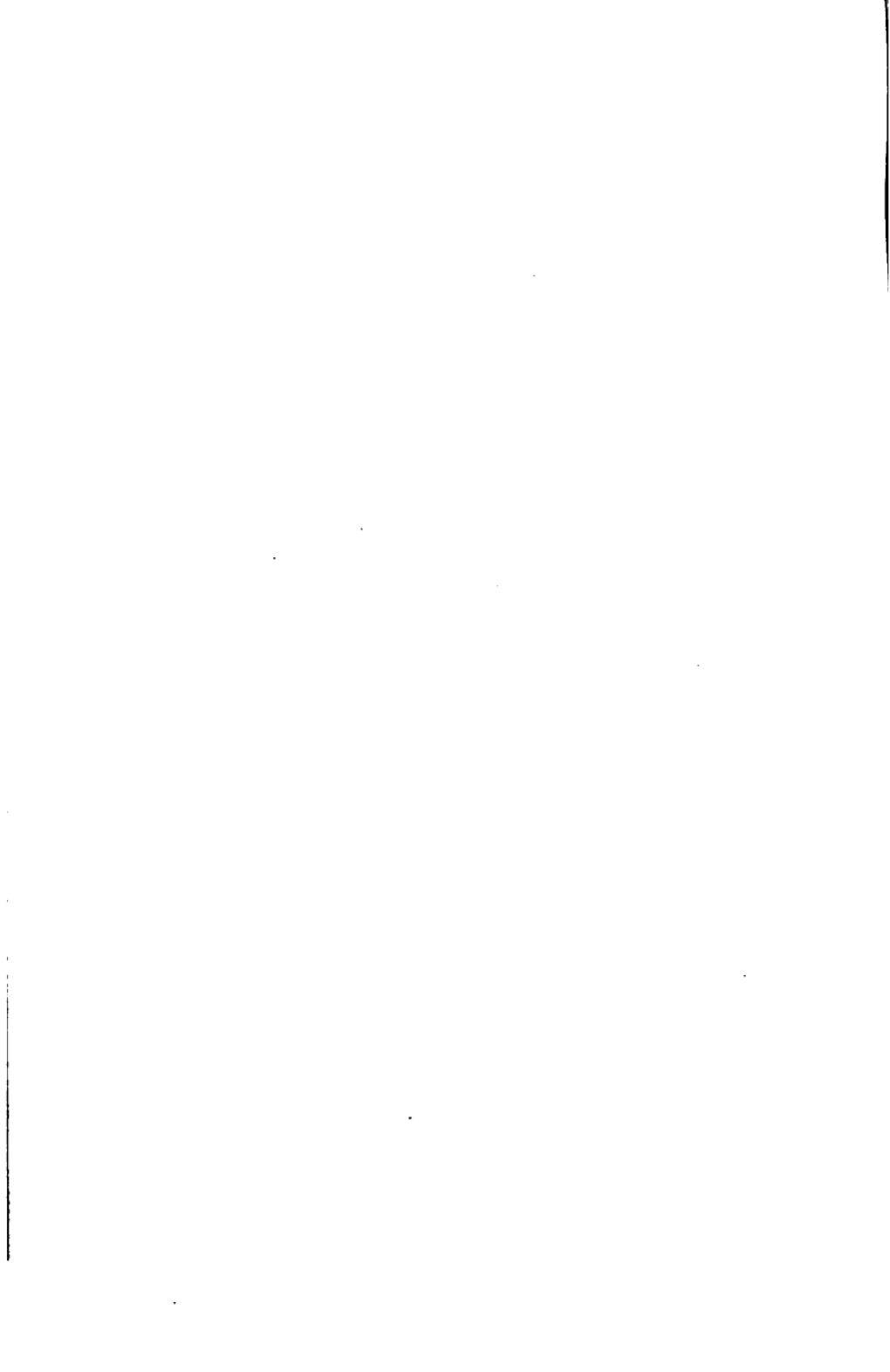
The coins of the Boduni (Bodvoc) are supposed to have circulated in Gloucestershire; those of Tasciovanus and Cunobeline, among the Iceni in the eastern counties; those of Commius and his sons, in the south. But if we meet with specimens of all these coins spread over Berkshire,—Wantage, Abingdon, Faringdon, Wallingford and Newbury—the fact serves to indicate a certain amount of inter-tribal communication and commerce.

If we are satisfied that early British tribes were long in possession of the district, we can be equally confident about its subjugation and occupation by the Romans. For, the



ROMAN POTTERY AND CELTS.

(Photo by Tom Revelcy, Wantage).



Downs above Wantage eastwards and westwards, and the Vale of White Horse below the town, teem with unmistakeable evidences of Roman roads, camps, villas, and cemeteries. Of these evidences the two last named are the most decisive, because they point to peaceful and continued settlement.

The basement of a large Roman villa in Cranhill field, about one mile due west of Wantage, was brought to light in October, 1876. A detailed account appeared in the Journal of the Royal Archæological Institute for 1877, from which the following particulars are transcribed.

The buildings covered an area of about 320 square yards, the greatest length being 82 feet, and the breadth 36 feet. The living house was divided into five compartments, measuring 21 feet by 18, by 11½ and by 10. A hypocaust with eight short pillars was disclosed, in excellent preservation. Among the *débris* were broken pieces of pottery of many shapes and colours; iron nails, clamps, bolts and hinges; bones of sheep, oxen and deer; oyster and snail shells in abundance. Not many coins were found while the excavations were going on, through the months of October and November, 1876, but the farm labourers stated that they had frequently picked up small bits of brass when ploughing and hoeing, during the previous twenty years. Somewhere about 1750, a hoard of Roman coins was dug up in the parish of Letcombe Regis, and as Cranhill is in that parish, we may fairly assume that the treasure trove originally belonged to Cranhill villa. The Rev. George Woodward, Rector of East Hendred from 1744 to 1790, thus reports the find in a letter dated August 21, 1759:—

“About ten years ago a parcel of coins was dug up in a

common field, at a place called Letcombe. The owner of the land discovered three or four vessels one within another, in the shape of a hat. It was full of holes like a cullender, and I think it was brass, for I saw one myself. In this was a number of small coins, most of them silver and a few gold, of the size of half a guinea and as bright. The coins were those of the lower emperors." (Bibl. Topog. Brit. 29). Another clergyman, the Rev. R. Forster, of Shefford, supplies further particulars: "There was one gold coin purchased by Frogley, who keeps the Bear Inn at Wantage. Most of the silver ones were purchased by Dr. Eyre, of Brightwaltham." (Id. 57).

Another villa was discovered near Uffington in 1884, (Morgan, Romano-British Pavements, 149) and other villas existed at Chinham and Frilford, as we know by the quantity of coins, skeletons, and ornaments exhumed.

Dr. Francis Wise, who wrote the celebrated "Letter to Dr. Mead concerning some Antiquities in Berkshire" (Oxford, 1738), was of opinion that a Roman fortification about Belmont, once defended Wantage against the commanding Sagbury camp. "To an antiquary," he writes, "I believe it will appear that all footsteps of the Roman majesty are not quite lost: the Castrum or Fortification discovering itself to me pretty plainly, on the south side of the brook enclosing a place called High Garden" (51). There must certainly have been Roman buildings of some description, on the brow and eastern slopes of the hill (Limborough and Belmont Gardens) which is now occupied by St. Mary's Home, for coins have been constantly dug up there during the last 150 years. They are, like the Cranhill coins, mostly of late date (A.D. 300-400), such

as those of the Constantine dynasty, with Valens, Valentinian, and Gratian, and generally in poor preservation. In some localities the finds often consist entirely of brass ; in a few select places such as Chinharn, silver coins prevail of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines.\*

The Portway connected Wantage with Wallingford, which, whatever its ancient name, was certainly an important Roman station. "Old Street" ran straight from Wantage to Silchester, formerly the metropolis of a wide district, and now one of the most interesting places in the kingdom for Roman remains. Hewett, in his Hundred of Compton pronounces "Old Street" to be "the most distinctly marked Roman road in the country" (p. 118), but this is a gross exaggeration. Its course was through Farnborough towards Stanmore, then over Beedon Common by Sandy Lane to Grimsbury Castle.

The roads to Abingdon and Oxford no doubt existed then, as now. At Frilford, where the road splits, Roman relics—leaden coffins, skeletons, coins, urns, fibulæ, &c.—are so abundant, that Professor Rolleston was able to say positively, that what is now an insignificant hamlet was a "populous place" in the fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian era. (*Archæologia* for 1868).

Chinharn, which has already been mentioned, is another spot which has yielded many evidences of Roman occupa-

\* Roman coins go by various names in the mouths of peasants. At Silchester they are called "Onion's pennies"; at Dorchester, near Wallingford, "Cæsars"; at Wroxeter, "Dinders," evidently a corruption of denarius; at Aldborough the brass coins of the Constantine family are "so common that they are known as Aldborough halfpennies." (Morgan, 73, 141. Wright's *Utriconium*, 327).

tion, in particular, coins so plentiful that the labourers say "they pick them up in handfuls." No fewer than 150 were purchased on one occasion, consisting of many well preserved specimens of Faustina, Gallienus, Tetricus, Claudius Gothicus, the Constantine family, Licinius, Magnentius, Valens, and Valentinian, a fair proportion being silver. It may not be judicious to describe too minutely the exact whereabouts of Chingham. The numismatist must consult Maine's History and Antiquities of Stamford. (Parker, 1866).

## CHAPTER II.

### THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD.

FROM the number of camps and barrows near Wantage, we may be quite sure that the Berkshire Downs and the broad spreading plains below their northern front, must have been the theatre of repeated conflicts between Britons and Saxons, and between the tribes of the Saxons themselves, especially those of Wessex and Mercia; but the English Chronicle makes mention of only five events that concern this neighbourhood, previous to the reign of Alfred the Great. There was a fierce battle at the commanding position of Wanborough, in 591, and another in 715; a decisive battle at Bampton, twelve or fourteen miles north-west of Wantage, in 614; one at Benson, about the same distance to the east, in 779 and a last one at Ellandune, on Wiltshire territory, in 823. Of these five battles most interest for us attaches to that fought at Bampton, because the two Saxon leaders were the brothers Cynegils and Cwichelm, who were closely connected with this district. Cynegils was the chieftain who received baptism from the hands of St. Birinus, at the old Roman city of Dorchester-on-Thame, and who therefore must have been instrumental in promoting Christianity among his followers locally, while Cwichelm was the chieftain whose name is perpetuated in Cuckhamsley Knob, to which reference was made in Chapter I.

In the year 849 an event occurred at Wantage which gave it its one undeniable claim to an everlasting niche in English history, and which, more than anything else, has saved it from absolute neglect by chroniclers. This event was the birth of Alfred, afterwards known as the Great. That Wantage was his birthplace has never been disputed; it is in fact indisputable, because we have the clear testimony of Alfred's contemporary biographer, Asser, Bishop of Sherborne. His exact words are: "Anno Domini DCCCXLIX., natus est Ælfred Angulsaxonum rex in villa Regia quæ dicitur Wanating, in illa paga quæ nominatur Berroscire." (De rebus gestis Ælf). It is impossible after the gap of a thousand years, to determine with exactitude where stood the royal villa which gave birth to the illustrious Alfred, for no authority so much as suggested the precise locality until Dr. Wise paid his antiquarian visit to Wantage in 1738, and penned his famous letter to Dr. Mead.\* Dr. Wise's observations are as follows: "The hollow way into the town from Faringdon, with Grove Street (which was within the memory of persons now living, a hollow way too) and a little running water—now a morass—dividing the high gardens from the lower, make three sides of an oblong square and the river the fourth. The

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\* The Rev. Francis Wise was born in 1695, took his M.A. degree in 1717, was appointed Radcliffe Librarian in 1748, and died in 1767, when Rector of Rotherfield Grays. The Wises were an old Oxfordshire family, residing at Drayton and Dorchester, nine miles east of Oxford. Leland mentions them in 1542. There are fine monuments in Dorchester churchyard to John Wise, who died in 1634, and Edward Wise, who died in 1717. In 1754 Dr. Johnson paid several visits to Dr. Wise at Elsfield. (Boswell, viii.)

ground may contain about six acres. Here stood the Saxon palace where Alfred was born. Between Limborough and the brook is a close called Court Close, and another little piece of ground in some modern writings which I have seen called Paddock's More, alias Pallet's More, which I suspect to be a corruption of Palace Moor." Clarke, in his "Hundred of Wanting," published in 1824, quotes this paragraph of Dr. Wise and adds these notes: "Nearly a century (*hodie*, 163 years) has elapsed since these remarks were written, and the alterations in that period of time have necessarily changed the appearance of the place, and effaced many of the minor traces which characterised the Roman fortification. Among others a branch of the canal from Bristol to Abingdon penetrates the centre of the ground which Dr. Wise marked out."

Accepting Dr. Wise's conjectures as reasonable and trustworthy, we gather that the six acres which formed the "estate" belonging to the Saxon palace, included the parts now called Belmont and Limborough, on the west side of the brook, and that the villa itself stood on the high ground by St. Mary's Home. It has already been noted that Roman coins have been constantly picked up at this particular spot,\* and as a few Saxon sceattas are also recorded thence, we may conclude that the Romans first occupied the ground, with a fort of some description, and that the Anglo-Saxons utilised the same ground, for the erection of a royal villa. But though built for royalty, we must not

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\* "In Limborough Roman coins are commonly found. I saw a brass one of Valens, ploughed up last year, the reverse Securitas Reipublicæ." (Wise's letter).

picture to ourselves a noble castle, or lordly mansion. At best it would only have been a straggling wooden residence, "timbered," according to the Saxon phrase, when speaking of churches or houses. The royal domain was given by Alfred to his daughter Aelswyth. *Insuper concedo Ælswydo villam de Wantingh.* (Cod. Dipl. v. 131).

Some people still hold firmly to the idea that the palace stood on the ground now occupied by "The Mead" (the property of Lord Wantage). Their chief reason for this belief is the fact that there is near the Mead a brick "bath" or "well" which has for some time been called King Alfred's Bath.\* It is, however, extremely doubtful if the bricks which compose the bath are one hundred years old, so that no value can be attached to this argument. When in the year 1849 a number of notabilities came to Wantage to commemorate the millenary of Alfred's birth, they went in procession, *not* to the well at the Mead, but to some obscure spot in an orchard near Belmont, where was

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\* It is said that in reality the "bath" was dug out and bricked in, by one Alfred Hazel, a former owner of the Mead (possibly for sheep dipping) and was then called "Alfred Hazel's Bath." It is easy to see how this soon became "Alfred's Bath," and then "King Alfred's Bath." The bricks have a suspicious resemblance to those which were made at Challow, early last century, of green sand, many of which are still to be found in the town. The pond which is close to the bath, is said to have beneath its muddy surface an old coach, said to be the one formerly used by Mr. Chas. Price (he was Lord Mayor of London in 1802, and his family lived in Wantage) on his journeys to and from the metropolis. It was highly gilded, and minus wheels, and was at one time used as a bathing machine, by men who bathed in the pond.

supposed to be the King's bath or cellar! Both references to Alfred are equally mythical.

Alfred was the youngest son of Ethelwulf and was his father's favourite. When only four years old he was taken to Rome, where Pope Leo IV. received him as his "Bishopson," according to the expression in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and hallowed him as King. The prospect, it is said, of obtaining from his mother, a richly illuminated manuscript, or what is better authenticated, the skilful guidance of Asser, Bishop of Sherborne, helped him to overcome the first difficulties of learning, and awakened in him that taste for literature, which later on, added so greatly to the welfare of his people. The young prince owed much of his early ambition to his stepmother, Judith, whose influence over his mind seems to have been considerable, and was always exerted in encouraging him to apply himself to his studies. It was her delight to recite to him the old Saxon poems which, in those early days, practically contained the history of the country, and these stories of the deeds of daring of his ancestors fired his youthful imagination. Asser says that before he was twelve years old he had paid *two* visits to Rome, and there is no doubt that the difference between the comparative comfort and luxury of the Romans, and the half savage state of his own people at home, greatly impressed the thoughtful lad, and possibly even then he made up his mind that he would do his best to emulate his great contemporaries. But at a time when the country was hardly ever free from war, when the monasteries (the only seats of learning then in existence) were destroyed, and men literally carried their lives in their hands, it was not an easy matter to learn; but young Alfred

with that perseverance and energy, which were such essential points in his character, learned to read not only Anglo-Saxon, but Latin; for all that was best in the literature of those early days was in the latter tongue.

In his twentieth year Alfred was obliged to relinquish these scholastic exercises and to take the field with his brother Ethelred against the Danes, who at this time were pouring into the country in great hordes, and were masters of one-half of England. They had taken York and Nottingham, had laid waste East Anglia, and were now invading Wessex. From their headquarters at Reading they descended into the very heart of the Royal County by Streatley, Cholsey, and Wantage, until they were brought face to face with the army of Ethelred at Ashdown, and Ashbury, the higher ground defended by a circular camp, above the White Horse; the lower ground by a square Roman camp. Here the enemy suffered a severe defeat and were driven back to Reading in a rout, which was continued without intermission through a whole night and "even unto the following day." (Asser). This battle of Æcesdún will ever be memorable as being the first great victory over the Danes; yet it must be confessed it had no permanent effects; it was but a temporary check. Speed's account of the battle is as follows:—

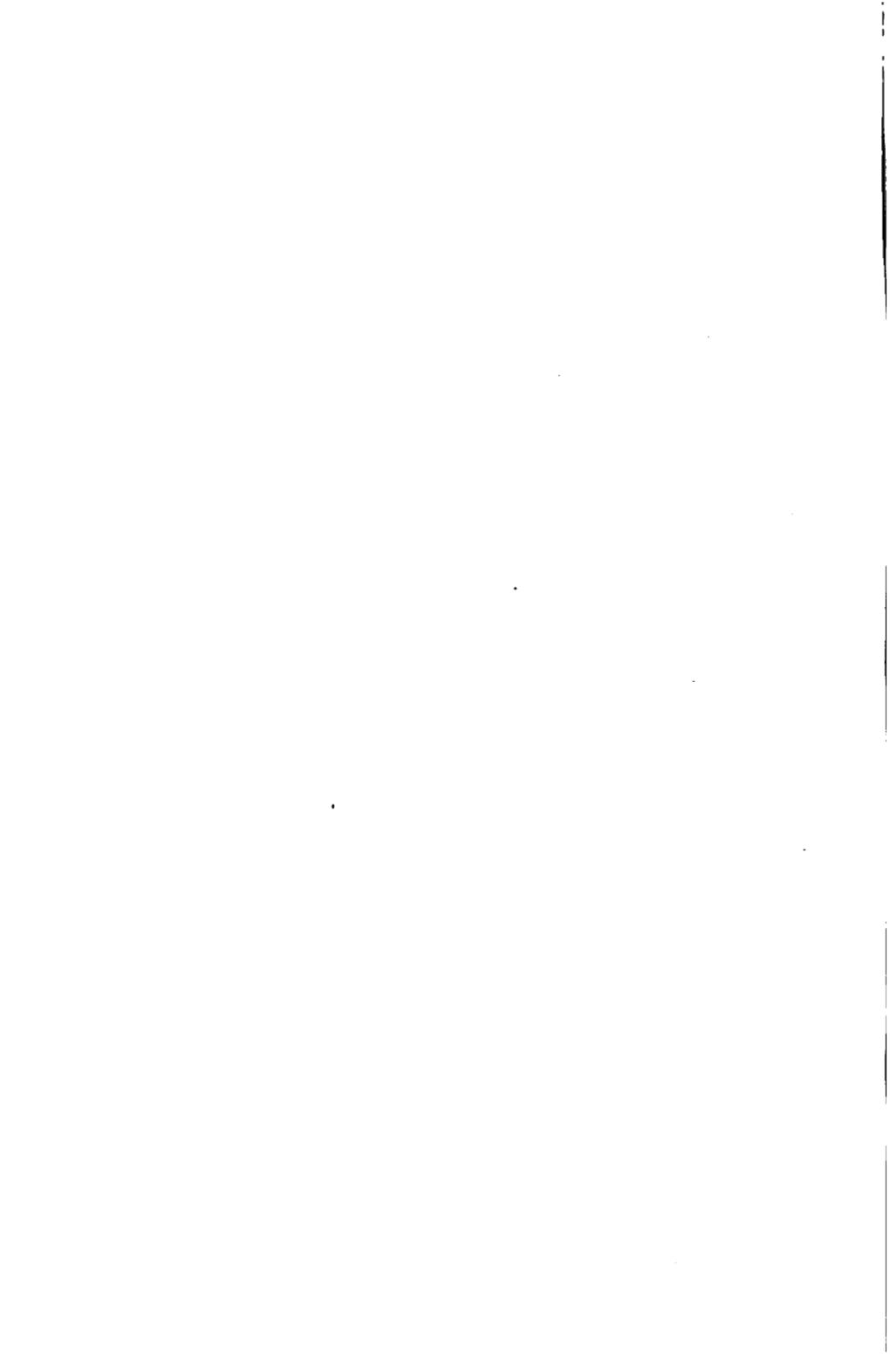
"These Danes, fearing that delaies would prove dangerous and knowing that the first successe is commonly followed with further courage of hope, foure days after showed themselves in field ready to fight. Their hoast they divided into two batalians, whereof the one was guided by two of their Kings, and certain Earles were leaders of the other, which when the English perceived they also divided

[*Tom Reveley, Wantage.*

WHITE HORSE HILL.]

*Photo by]*





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theirs, whereof King Ethelred had the leading of the first, and Alfred his brother was generall of the second ; the place was Assendon, where their tents were pitched and the day approached for battaile. King Ethelred in his tent staid so long in praiers, that Alfred upon a forward courage hasted to encounter the enemy, and that with a most fierce and sharpe fight, wherein having spent the most of their strengthes and ready to decline and give backe, Ethelred manfully entered the bataille and so seconded his brother and over tyred soldiers, that he made way by dint of his own sword through the thickest of their almost conquering enemies and with such loss of the Danish blood drawne from the sides of one of their kinges, five earles and an infinite number of the common soldiers that the streames thereof seemed as an over swelling tide altogether to cover the face of the field, and is accounted as the noblest victory that the English till then had gotten of the Danes."

As noted in Chapter I. it was supposed, and indeed is still supposed by many, that the effigy of the White Horse,\*

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\* Wise says in his letter to Dr. Mead (p. 17) : "The very names of the two first Saxon leaders are supposed by Bishop Nicholson not to be proper, but typical or emblematical only. For Hengist in Saxon signifies no more than a stone horse, and Horsa need not be explained to the English reader.

The White Horse was the Saxon Standard and an object of veneration to the Germans, but it appears to have had a much higher original, even among the oldest Pagan idolators. Tacitus tells us "It was the custom of this people to take carefully the presages of certain white horses, kept for that purpose in their sacred groves, free from any sort of labour, except when harnessed to the Sacred Chariot, at which time it was usual for the priest or king or chief man of the city to accompany it and observe their neighings, and

cut in chalk on the face of the hill, above Uffington and below Ashdown circular camp, was the work of Alfred, as a memorial of his victory, and Dr. Wise published two papers in support of this contention, but *proofs* are altogether wanting, and mere conjectures count for nothing. In speaking of this turf carving Dr. Wise says:—"He (Alfred) has shown an admirable contrivance, in erecting one (memorial) magnificent enough, though simple in its design, executed too with little labour and expense, that may hereafter vie with the Pyramids for duration, and perhaps exist when they are no more."

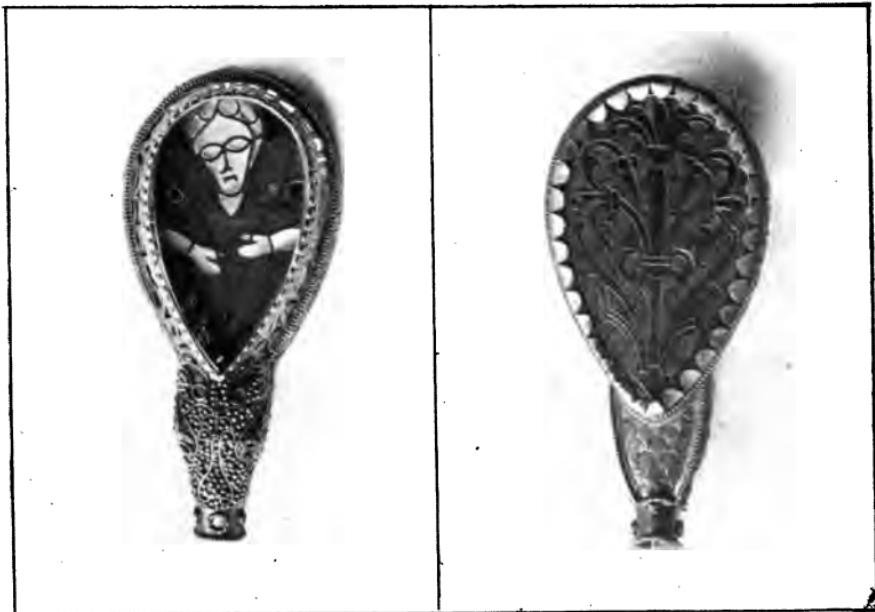
Soon after the battle of Æcesdún King Ethelred died and was succeeded by Alfred in the twenty-third year of his age. For a time the Danes seem to have been engaged chiefly in Mercia and Northumbria, but in 876 large bodies of them landed on the coasts of Dorsetshire and swept over Devon, Somerset, and Wilts, capturing one of the royal palaces at Chippenham. In 878 Alfred with a few followers was forced to retreat to the Isle of Athelney in the marshes which lie between the Tone and Parratt. (A most curious and interesting memorial of the king's retirement to Athelney has come down to us in the shape of an ornament, in gold and enamel, which was found there in the 17th century.\*

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this with them is esteemed the most credible kind of augury, for they imagine these horses are the servants of the gods."

The famous White Horse on the Berkshire Downs is 374 feet long, marked by trenches 10 feet wide and cut deep into the turf which covers the white subsoil of chalk that faces the valley of the Thames.

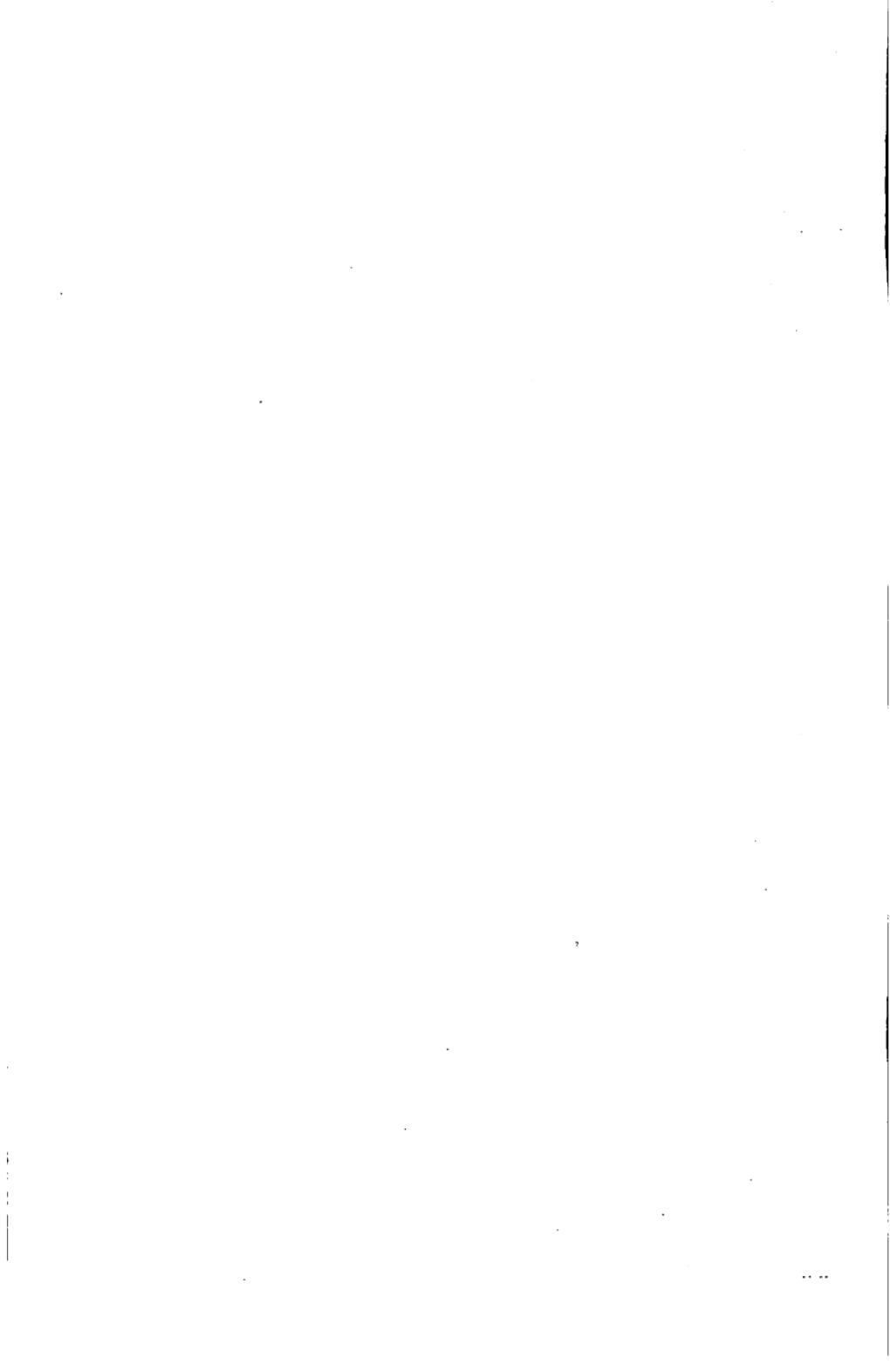
\* The latest scientific discovery, in connection with this jewel, is that it formed the centre ornament of a crown, which the king wore round his helmet while fighting.



*Photo by]*

**KING ALFRED'S JEWEL.**

[*Tom Reveley. Wantage.*



It bears the inscription,  
AELFRED ME HEHT GEVVRGAN=  
“ Alfred had me wrought,”

which leaves no doubt as to its origin and authenticity. It is preserved in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford). It was from Athelney that Alfred conceived and carried out the bold design of entering the Danish Camp,\* disguised as a harper, thus seeing their false security, and the contempt in which they held their enemies. During this time Oddune, the spirited Earl of Devonshire, having armed his vassals, fell suddenly upon a detached part of the Danish army, commanded by Hubba, and completely routed them. Hubba was among the slain, and what perhaps was of greater importance, the Reafen

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\* Cherbury Camp is of a certain amount of interest to *all* Englishmen, but especially to the men of Wantage, and Berkshire, because this is the camp, where tradition says, Alfred the Great penetrated by night in the disguise of a minstrel to learn the plans of the Danes. So at any rate Lord Carnarvon asserts in his *Archæology of Berkshire* (p. 25). It is unique in Berkshire, for its circular earth-works are threefold, its greatest diameter being 310 paces. It is thus described in a “*Compleat History of Berks.*” published in 1730 :—

“ In the precincts of Charney, within two miles from Denchworth, is to be seen an orbicular Rampire, treble ditched, and called by the name of Cherbury Castle, very much resembling Badbury Castle, in Dorsetshire, both in form and figure, but not altogether of so large an extent” (p. 172). Its name appears bilingual—*Caer*—the old Celtic word for camp, and *beorh*, the Anglo-Saxon word for camp.

A polished flint celt with flattened sides and faceted edge, in length 5½ inches, is recorded from this camp by Sir John Evans, and fell into the possession of Mr. Frank Buckland.

(Raven) or enchanted banner, regarded as a certain pledge of victory, was taken by the conquerors. The news of Oddune's success determined Alfred to sally forth from his retreat. Gathering together his scattered followers, he planned an attack on the main body of the Danes encamped at Ethandún or Edington near Westbury, below the ancient noble earthworks of Bratton "castle." In a great battle, followed by a fourteen days' siege, Alfred gained a glorious victory. A "frith" or solemn peace was signed at Wedmore with the Danish leader Guthrun, who was baptised as a Christian and invested by Alfred with a subordinate authority for the maintenance of peace among his countrymen. We who live in sight of the battlefield of Ashdown are accustomed to magnify Alfred's victory in 871, but that at Edington in 878 was far more important in its results by reason of the peace of Wedmore, which held good for ten years, and by the Christianising of the Danes.

Ceding to the Danes according to treaty arrangements one-half of England—roughly speaking, all east of Watling Street—and retaining for himself south-west Mercia and all Wessex, with London and the country round it, Alfred was now able to devote his best energies to the objects he had nearest to his heart, namely the defence of his kingdom from attacks by land or sea and the bettering his people by the enactment of suitable laws, the rebuilding of churches and monasteries, and the establishment of schools. First of all he instituted a militia and built numerous fortresses. Next he provided himself with a trained fleet to protect his hitherto defenceless coasts on the English Channel. On completing his military and naval organisation, he devoted himself to internal improvements. During the Danish wars

the action of the law had become a dead letter, and excesses of all kinds went unchecked and unpunished. But under Alfred the laws of Offa were codified and amended, justice was more rigidly administered, corporal punishment was substituted for the old "blood-wite" or money fine, and the right of private revenge was curtailed. (Green). In order that the effect of just law might penetrate equally to all parts of his realm, Alfred is said to have divided it into counties, with divisions into "hundreds," and sub-divisions into "tithings." The bursholder or head of a tithing was responsible for the good conduct of his tithing. In any case of importance twelve men were taken from the hundred, who examined the case and gave judgment accordingly. Then the County Court met twice a year, presided over by a bishop or alderman, to receive appeals from the hundred, each county being presided over by a sheriff. Above all these was the right of appeal to the king himself, and such appeals, frequently as they occurred, were never made in vain; were indeed always heard with patience and justice. Although at this time suffering from a severe bodily ailment which caused constant and agonising pain, the king never spared himself, and having established an office of appeal he was obliged to correct many grievances caused by the ignorance of subordinates.

Education occupied his next endeavours. This was indeed a difficult task, for books were scarce owing to the destruction of monastic libraries, and teachers almost non-existent. Unable to find at home, even among the clergy, sufficient schoolmasters for his needs, he invited assistance from foreign countries, especially France, which sent him learned men from the abbeys of St. Omer and Corby.

"Formerly," wrote the king, "men came hither from foreign lands to seek for instruction, and now when we desire it, we can only obtain it from abroad." Schools were opened in all directions and injunctions issued that every freeholder possessed of two hides of land\* should send his children to school. The king himself translated into Anglo-Saxon the popular manuals of the age, the dialogues of Pope Gregory, the ecclesiastical history of Bede, the Roman history of Orosius, and the Consolation of Boethius. "In reality," says Green, "Alfred created English literature." Before him England possessed in her own tongue one great poem (that of Cædmon) and some ballad and battle songs. Prose she had none.

All appointments in Church or State were given to those who by their superior knowledge and ability could best further the king's wishes. Above all he had his people instructed in the great truths of the Christian religion. Some historians assert that he made a translation of the Bible, but this is by no means certain. At any rate he was a staunch supporter of Christianity, and carried out its precepts in his own life, knowing full well that its influences would contribute more than anything else to the moral and social improvement of his subjects.

Commercial enterprise was greatly encouraged, and by means of navigation the Saxons were able to visit distant countries for the prosecution of trade. Foreigners were allowed to settle in the country, introducing industries and manufactures which until then were unknown to the Saxons. The ruined towns and monasteries were rebuilt at the king's expense.

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\* A hide of land was sufficient to employ one plough.

As we look back on this man who stands out so pre-eminently through the ages we cannot but recognise what a marvellous personality his was. Asser makes his character as near perfection as can be, and modern writers have followed suit in their appreciations. Freeman, for example, his warmest panegyrist, proclaims Alfred as "at once captain, law-giver, saint, and scholar; the deliverer, the ruler, and the teacher of his people." And again, "Alfred is great not by the special development of some one or two powers or virtues, but by the equal balance of all." Of course many acts attributed to him are legendary, and really belong to persons of an earlier or a later date. Still, with these deductions, his reputation is hardly in excess of his merits, for no man in history seems to have united so many admirable qualities. He came to the throne at a time of extreme national danger, and a considerable portion of his reign was taken up in warfare with a determined enemy; yet he found time to do more work personally for the enlightenment of his people than any other king in our history. To him England owes the foundation of her Empire, for he it was who fostered her military and naval forces, and by the victories of *Æcesdún* and *Ethandún* saved us from the threatened mastery of the Danes.

Alfred the Great died on the 28th of October, 901, and was buried in the precincts of Winchester Abbey, founded and partly built by himself. His son and successor, Edward, transferred the remains of Alfred and of Alswitha into the Abbey Church itself, but subsequently they were deposited in the monastery at Hyde, on the north side of Winchester. The following is an extract from Alfred's Will, wherein it will be seen Wantage is mentioned:—

[*Cartularium Saxonicum*; ed. by W. De Gray Birch; vol. ii., 1887].

554. Early English Translation of No. 553.

**EXPLANATIO TESTAMENTI ALFREDI REGIS, DE LINGUA  
SAXONICA IN ANGLICAM. [A.D. 880-885.]**

I Alfred, Westsaxene kyng, wyth Goddys zyft, and by thy wyttenesse I seye now the intention of my last wylle, to be fulfyllyd aftyr my day. Fyrst, I grawnte to Edward, my yldist sone, the londes at Stratnet, in Triconschyre, and Hortyngtune, and all the frelond that Leof-hath hold, and that lond at Carumtune, and at Kylfantune, and at Burnham, and at Wedmore; and I conferme to the keper at Ceodre tha he hyt have, after the puynctyng that we erst seyde hafe, wt that land at Kyntune, and that thereto longyth. And I to him grawnte the londis at Kantintune, and at Bedewynde, and at Pefesy, and at Hysseburñ, and at Suttune, and at Leodridan, and at Aultune. And all the frelond that I in Kent have, and at Nether Hysseburñ, and at Kyseldene, I zyve my chef servant at Wynchester, after the synement that hyt my fadyr er beqwethyd, and myn other fee that I to Egulfe gafe un to, at certeyn tyme at the Nether Hysseborne. And that my zongyr sone have that lond at Ederingtune, and that at the Dene, and that at Mene, and at Ambresbury, and at Deone, and at Sturemynster, and at Zeule, and at Kruerne, and at Whytchyrche, and at Axamuntham, and at Branescumbe, and at Kolumtune, and at Twyfyrd, and at Myllenburñ, and at Exanmynster, and at Sutheswyrthe, and at Lyntune, and the lond that there to longyth, the whyche be all that I under hevyn have, uttake Trikonschyre.

¶ And to my ilderyst dowther, I grawnt the twyne of

Welewe ; and to the mydmest dowther, I graunte the twune of Klere, and of Kendevere ; and to my zongyst dowthtyr, I graunte the twune of Welyg, and of Ascktune, and of Schyppenam.

¶ And to Athelme, my brotherys sone, I grawnt the twune of Eleyngburñ, and of Kumptune, and of Krundele, and of Bedyngum, and of Bedyngham, and of Burnham, and of Thunresfeld, an[d] of Aschengum.

¶ And to Athelwold, my brotherys sone, the twune of Godelmynge, and of Gylford, and of Stemugum.

¶ And to Osferthe, my cosyn, I graunte the twune of Beccanle, and of Rytherhamfeld, and of Dyccanlyngum, and of Suttune, and of Lullyngarynster, and of Angemeryngum, and of Felthham, and the lond that there to longyth.

¶ And to Alswythe, the twne of Lamburne, and of Wantyngh, and of Ethandune.

¶ And to my twey sonys, I beqweyth a thwsund pund, eythyr fyf hundryd pund.

¶ And to myn ilderyst dowzter, and to the myddelyst, and to the zongyst, and to Alswythe, to hem fowr, fowr hundryd pund, everyche of hem an hunderyd pund.

¶ And to everyche of my gentylmen an hunderyd mark.

¶ And to Ethelme, and to Athelwolde, and Osferthe, also, everyche of hem an hunderyd mark.

¶ And to Ethered, my gentylman, I zyve a swerd, and twenti hunderyd mark.

¶ And to that man that folwyth me, wyt wham at Estyrtyd I covenauant made, I take too hunderyd pund that man to zyve, and that man to partye be twyxte all tho ther hym to be byryyd lykyth, after the wyse that I now to him dele.

¶ And to the Erchebyschop, I zyve an hunderyd mark; and Esne, byschop, and Werferthe, byschop; and to hym of Schyrburn, everyche of hem as myche, for to departye, and to dele, for me, and for my fadyr, and for that thyng that he before asynyd. And I asyne too hunderyd pund to fyfty masse prestys twrw all my reem. And fifti schilyngys to every of Godys servauntys; and fyfty schylyng to dele among the powr peple; and fyfty to the chyrche wher that I am byryyd.

¶ And I not nat trewely weyther ther ys more than these syftys, ne I trow that there ys no more as I wene. Yf yt more be, be hyt all demenyd as I to zyve have seyd.

¶ And I wyll that my gentylmen, and my zymen, and al tho that wyth hem beth, that they thys thus departye, ne on none other wyse than I have wryte by fore, to fore my heyr to wham I have most zyve and most myzt. And monymen han at thys tyme ther to wryte, and to fore all thys wyttenesse thes yyftes were i-wryte, than have I now forchargyd the pryncys of my reeme that I aske myzt of hem that fundyn byth, that hyt let not, for that that hyt ys my wyll that hyt nw be thus, thorw Goddys strenkth.

¶ And I wyl that tho men the whyche these londes havyn, kepe the word that of my faderys herytage stondyth i-write, of myche as they strengyst mowe. And I wyll yf I eny man have gyfe, or eny lenyd have, that they to my cosynis or to here hyt sene.

¶ And I wyll that tho men that I my freland have beqwethyd, that they zyve hyt nat from my kynne overe here day. And I wyll that aftyr here day to the next hond of me, wythowte hem that chyldryn have, than ys me levyst that hyt go to the mawl chyld by-gete, as long whyle as eny

on erthe be. Myn yldyr fadyr hys lond, on the same wyse, be-qweythyd to the mawlys. And then yf I take hyt on eny degré to wommenys hond, I wyll that, aftyr here day, he to zelde hyt to my mawlys kyn, the whyche comen of here. And yf they by here lyf lyvynge hyt will have ; and yf it ell be, than go hyt ovyr here day, so as we here byfore have be-qwethyd.

¶ Ferthermore I sey that they hyt zelde for the lyvelode of my kyn to whem I zeve most, whether they ben mayde chyldrym, or sonys, as me best lykyth ; and I bydde, on Goddys name, and on all halewene, that none of my kyn hereaftyrward labor not azenst eny of ther kynrede that I have zyve and be-qwethyd to here byfore. And wt me all the worthynesse of West-saxone to ryzt consentyn that I most leve hem as fre as thowt, wheythyr that I wyll ; and I for Goddys love, and for my sowle helthe, wylle that they in possessyon of here fredom, and alle here kyred, and I on Goddys holy name comawnde that them no man wythsey, nother wt strenthe nother wt eny thyng, that they ne mote sesyn what man wham they wylle in here londys.

¶ And I wyll than men zeve to the hows at Domrahamme here land-bok, and here fredomys, hem to seosyn what hond hem levyst is, for me, and for Elfiede, and for here frendys that he ys bownd to, and that I am bounde to, and for the nedys that alyve be, to kepe hyt, that yt may be helthe for my sowle, and that hyt be to me in forzyvenes, and so I desyre me to be forzeve.

We hear no more of Wantage until the year 990, when Ethelred summoned a council there. The subject chiefly discussed was the amount of tolls to be paid by fishing

boats on discharging their cargoes at Billingsgate. A very much more important gathering took place in 997. It began its sittings at Calne, but after a few days moved on to Wantage. Here, according to Freeman, besides the usual business of confirming the king's grants of land and privileges to churches or individuals, a code of laws was drawn up. The labours of the Witan seem to have had special reference to the country which had been occupied by the Danes. The laws then passed are chiefly devoted to the administration of justice and the preservation of peace. The scanty records of this period will not be complete without the insertion of the Charter signed by King Ethelred on this occasion. The Latin text is as follows:—

Ego Ædelred, Dei providentia rex Anglorum, cunctis innotesco hanc scedulam perscrutantibus, qualiter in honore Sanctæ Trinitatis C (100) mansas in loco qui ab accolis æt Duntune cognominatur, ad ecclesiam apostolorum (Petri et Pauli) quæ in Venta civitate in vetusto usque hodie perdurat cœnobio restauraverim, ob sedulam humilitatem Ælfheah eiusdem urbis pontificis et rectoris. Quam videlicet portionem ipse ob enormem pueritiæ meæ juventutem mihiem aliquandiu usurpavi; sed tandem crebris meorum sapientum instinctus ammonitionibus dumque stabilitatem mentis ætas caperet iam adulta, cognovi me hanc iniuste possidere. Hujus nunc scedulæ renovatione constituo ut tellus ipsa supramemorata semper subolatur basilicæ uti in inchoatione Christianitatis a Kynewalho rege deliberatum est. Restitui autem præfatum rus almæ Trinitati indivisibilique Unitati ad eorumdem limina apostolorum in Ventana urbe pollutia sacrosancta tunc temporis pascali mundum irradiante solemnitate, collecta haud minima sapientum multi-

tudine in aula villæ regiæ quæ nuncupatur a populis æt Calne vocitatur. Ac sic paucis interpositis ymeris (=diebus) rursus advocata omnis exercitus, catena pontificum, abbatum, ducum, optimatum nobiliumque quamplurimorum ad villam quæ ab indigenis WANETINC<sup>G</sup> agnominatur ob diversarum quæstiones causarum corrigendas hoc interea hac scedula certius assignari permisi, plurimorumque senum auctoritate roborari dignum iudicavi, rotante sole XX<sup>mum</sup> mei imperii annum, qui est annus dominicæ incarnationis DCCCCXCVII, indictione X<sup>a</sup> acurrente. Et hæc sunt eorum onomata quorum testimonio ipsa nostra largitas satis digna prævalet assertione. . . .

† Ego Ædelred rex Anglorum hoc nostræ donum renovationis hac scedula demonstrari congruum duxi. . . . (Kemble's Cod. Dipl. iii. 300, No. 618).

#### TRANSLATION.

I, Ethelred, by the providence of God, King of the English, make known to all who examine this charter how I, in honour of the Holy Trinity and on account of the earnest supplication of Ælfsheah, bishop and ruler of Winchester, have restored to the church of the apostles Peter and Paul which remains to this day in the ancient abbey of the same city, 100 hides of land in the place called by the natives Dunton. This portion of land I in my extreme youth did once upon a time usurp to my own use; but moved at last by the frequent remonstrances of my wise men and when increased years brought me steadfastness of mind, I felt that I had become unjustly possessed of it, and now by the renewal of this charter I declare that the aforesaid land is restored to the church for ever, as was determined by King Kynewald at the introduction of

Christianity. And I have restored the aforesaid land to the holy Trinity and undivided Unity and the church of the apostles in the city of Winchester, at the time when the paschal solemnities were irradiating the world, and a by no means small number of wise men having then assembled in the court of our royal villa at Calne. After a few days interval, the entire army being summoned along with a crowd of bishops, abbots, earls, and the highest nobles, to a manor known as Waneting for the purpose of deciding questions on various cases, I meanwhile allowed this charter to be duly signed, and judged fitting that it should be confirmed by the authority of many venerable persons, the sun rolling round the 20th year of my reign and in the tenth induction. These are the names of those by whose testimony our grant is confirmed. . . .

† I, Ethelred, King of the English, have thought it proper that this grant of restoration should be made public by this charter."

This charter, which Freeman justly estimates as "remarkable and valuable" (Norm. Conq. i. 293) proves that Wantage was a town of considerable size and repute; otherwise such a magnificent gathering could not have found place there. Apparently, however, it was its last period of prominence and distinction, for in all probability Wantage suffered the fate that befel so many towns and villages at the hands of the Danes later on, namely in the disastrous year of 1006. The following passage bears out this conjecture: "They marched across Hampshire to Reading, wasting and burning the whole country. Thus they dealt with Reading, with Wallingford, with Cholsey. Then they plunged into the midst of a region where almost

every step is ennobled by memories of the great Alfred. They passed by his birthplace at Wantage ; they passed by Ashdown, where, in his terrible first campaign, victory had for a moment shone on the West Saxon banners." (Freeman, *supr.*)

We may be certain that Wantage would not be "passed by" without being ravaged by the unsparing Danes. It was of course partially re-built, but it never recovered its former importance and was never again the abode of royalty, though remaining royal property.\*

Four other Anglo-Saxon charters of the tenth century make mention of Wantage among the boundaries of lands given to churches or royal favourites.

1. A.D. 958. "Dis sind da landgemæra tō Draitfīne, æcer under æcer. Ærest of Englāfes forda on Dydmēre ; donon on Lacing ; andlang Lacing on cealcford ; donon on mær dīc ; andlang dīc on mydeling ; donon on Wanetinge ; andlang Wanetinge on Oeccene ; donone on da ealdan dīc ; andlang dīc on Englāfes ford." (Kemble, *Cod. Dip.* v. 397 ; Birch, *Cart. Sax.* iii. 234).

2. A.D. 960. Grant of land to Abingdon Abbey by King Edgar. This is a transfer of property given by King Eadred to Eadwold the thegn, as by preceding charter. The wording is almost identical. (Kemble, vi. 28 ; Birch, iii. 279).

3. A.D. 968. Grant of land at Hanney to Abingdon Abbey by King Edgar. "Dis sind da land gemæra to Hanige. Ærest on da ealdan dīc æt dæm heafod stoccan ;

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\* The Chronicle of the Monastery of Abingdon is full of lamentations over the ravages of the Danes in 1006 : "urbes subversas, vicos succensos, monasteria destructa," &c. (I. 37, 46, 49<sup>1</sup>).

andlang dîc on Waneting ; dæt andlang streâmes on done  
reâdan mære ; on Cylle rîde ; donne went it dær êst ; dæt  
andlang streâmes od hit scyt on Oeccene ; dæt andlang  
Oeccene od hit scyt on ealdan Wæneting ; donne went [h]it  
dær west." (The mention of "old" Wantage is curious, as  
though there were two places of the name). Kemble, vi.  
86 ; Birch, iii. 507.

4. Circa A.D. 995.

WILL OF WYNFLÆD.

"And hiô wile dæt man finde æt Inggenesham [me]ealfes  
pundes wyrdne sâutsceat tô Waneting for hy ; and æt  
Colleshylle." (Kemble, vi. 131).

## CHAPTER III.

### NORMAN AND MEDIEVAL PERIOD.

From the memorable year 997 until after the Norman Conquest Wantage is left in silence and obscurity. With Domesday it emerges into light again. The abbreviated record is as follows :—

#### TERRA REGIS IN WANETINZ HD.

Rex ten in dño Wanetinz. Rex E. tenuit. Tc. et modo III. hide. Nunq. geld. Tra e XXI. car. In dño sunt V. car. et XX. (XXX.?) villi cu XL. cott hnt XVII. car. Ibi V. servi. Val. LXI. lib. olim LV. lib.

In hoc M. tenuit Petrus eps II. partes eccle cum III<sup>or</sup> hid ibi ptinent. Nunq. geld. Modo sunt in manu regis qa n. erant de episcopatu.

Ibi e una car. et III. villi. et VII. cot. cum I. car et molin. de c den. et XII. ac pti. T'ra e II. car. Valuit III. lib. Modo IIII. lib.

Tercia parte pdicte eccle ten' Wills. diacon de rege cu I. hida que n geld. Ibi sunt IIII. villi cum I. car. Valuit XXV. sol. Modo 30 sol.

In a more intelligible form the record is as follows :—

Rex tenet in dominio Wanetinz. Rex Edwardus tenuit. Tunc et modo 3 hidæ. Nunquam geldabant. Terra est 21

carucæ. In dominio sunt 5 car. et 30 villani cum 40 cottarii habent 17 car. Ibi 5 servi. Valet 61 libras, olim 55 libras.

In hoc manorio tenuit Petrus Episcopus 2 partes ecclesiæ cum 4 hidis ibi pertinentibus. Nunquam geldabant. Modo sunt in manu Regis quia non erant de episcopatu.

Ibi est una caruca et 3 villani et 7 cotarii cum 1. car. et molinum de 100 denariis et 12 acræ prati. Terra est 2 car. Valuit 3 libras. Modo 4 libras.

Tertiam partem prædictæ ecclesiæ tenet Willelmus diaconus de Rege cum 1 hida quæ non geldat. Ibi sunt 4 villani cum 1 car. Valuit 25 solidos. Modo 30 solidos.

#### TRANSLATION.

##### THE LAND OF THE KING IN WANTAGE HUNDRED.

The King holds Wantage in demesne. King Edward so held it. Then and now 3 hides. It was never assessed. The land is 21 ploughlands. In demesne there are 5 ploughlands and 20 villeins with 40 cottiers (who) have 17 ploughlands. There are 5 serfs. It is worth £61, formerly £55.

In this manor Peter the Bishop held 2 parts of the church with 4 hides thereunto belonging. They were never assessed. They are now in the King's hand, because they did not belong to the bishopric. There is one ploughland and 3 villeins and 7 cottiers with one ploughland; also a mill which pays 100 pence and 12 acres of meadow. The land is 2 ploughlands. It was worth £3, now £4.

William the Deacon holds the third part of the aforesaid church from the King, with one hide, which is not assessed. There are 4 villeins, with one ploughland. It was worth 25 shillings, now 30 shillings.

## DOMESDAY.

Some elucidation of the denominations of money and land employed in the Great Survey may be acceptable. Professor Earle, when quoting the Domesday returns for Bath, says plainly, "The money value conveys to us no meaning at all." (Bath, Anc. and Mod. p. 76).

The Commissioners give their estimates in Latin words, which are translated by pounds, shillings, and pence, and we naturally think of our coins in circulation. But there were no sovereigns, or shillings in those days, nor for centuries after, and the pennies were not copper, but silver, and worth at least six or eight of our pennies. The "pounds" and "shillings" of Domesday were "coins of computation" only. Money payments were made by the silver penny or by uncoined pieces of gold and silver, a pound weight of the latter metal being equal to 240 pennies.

Rapin calculates the total value of the estates returned in Domesday amounted to £400,000; that he says, would be equivalent to five millions of our money.

Mr. W. De Grey Birch, F.S.A., goes much further, for he considers that "money was worth forty times more than it is now a days." (Domesday, 145 N.). Some examples of the purchasing power of money in the year 1185 may be cited in support of Mr. Birch's opinion. A fowl could be bought for a halfpenny, a sheep for sixpence, a pig for a shilling, and an ox for five shillings. (Flanagan, 910).

The divisions of land in acres, hides, and carucates present greater difficulties on account of the disagreement of modern authorities when attempting to define measurements.

"The acre," says Birch, "appears to have originally signified *no specific quantity of surface*," and again, "There appears to have been a Norman as well as an English acre." (Domesday, 215). It would therefore be hazardous to attempt to decide how much ground was covered by 12 "acres" of meadow in Wantage, or 53 "acres" in Charlton.

The "carucate" means plough land, that is, as much as an ox team could till in a year, say 120 acres, modern scale of measurement.

Although "the quantity of the hide was never expressly determined," it is safe to state that a hide was generally equivalent to a carucate, sometimes below 100 acres, and at other times considerably above.

A mill is mentioned in Wantage and another at Charlton—the former valued at 100 pennies, the latter at 7 shillings and 6 pennies. Birch remarks that where mills are named in Domesday, they are still to be found on the same site. He further remarks that no windmills are noticed in the Survey, but where could there have been a water mill in any part of Charlton parish?

The notices of Wantage after the Conquest are intermittent and disconnected, so that no consecutive history is possible, but many of these notices are of sufficient interest to be worth transcribing from the Calendar of Close Rolls and other official sources.

After remaining in royal possession for perhaps 40 years, the Manor of Wantage was alienated from the Crown by Richard I. in 1190 in favour of the Earl of Albemarle, who, dying in 1212, left an only daughter, Alice. The

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heiress married William Mareschal, Earl of Pembroke, who received the Manor of Wantage with her in frank marriage. On the marriage of Matilda, eldest daughter of the great Earl of Pembroke, to Hugh Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, in 1215, the Manor was given to Fulk Fitz Waryn by the Earl himself. The Fitz Waryns were the descendants of Guarine de Meez (of the House of Lorraine), who came over with the Conqueror and was made Sheriff of Shropshire in 1083.

The following extract from Collins' Peerage (Earls Extinct, p. 450) will best elucidate the genealogy of the Fitz Waryns, who were associated with Wantage for many centuries :—

“ Guarine de Meez was succeeded by his son Fulke, who was buried at Abberbury, in Shropshire, leaving a son of the same name, who had his castle at Abberbury, and was a potent Baron in the reign of King John. He lost his life in the battle of Lewes, A.D. 1264, leaving a son, Fulke, who had summons to Parliament as Lord Fitz Warine from 23 Edward I to 8 Edward II., when he died. His son Fulke, Lord Fitz Warine, had summons from 8 Edward II. to 9 Edward III. and died 23 Edward III., leaving his son Fulke, Lord Fitzwarine, who died 47 Edward III., leaving a son Fulke, who died 1 Richard II., leaving Fulke, his son and heir, who died, 15 Richard II., leaving a son, who died in 1407, leaving a son, who died in his minority, and a daughter, Elizabeth, wife of Sir Richard Hankford. Their daughter, Thomasine, married William Bourchier, who was summoned to Parliament from 27 Henry V. till 12 Henry VI., and was succeeded by his son Fulke, Lord Fitz Warine, who died 19 Edward IV., leaving a son and heir, Lord John Fitzwarine, who was created Earl of Bath 28 Henry VIII.,

and dying three years after was succeeded by his son John, second Earl of Bath, who died in 1560 and was succeeded by his grandson, William, third Earl of Bath, who died in 1623, and was succeeded by his son Edward, fourth Earl of Bath, who, dying in 1636, left three daughters his co-heirs. One of them, Anne, the third co-heir, was married twice, her second husband being Sir Chichester Wrey, Bart. But the Earldom went to the next heir male, namely, Sir Henry Bourchier, son to Sir Geo. Bourchier, third son of John, the second Earl of Bath. This Sir Henry Bourchier became fifth Earl of Bath, and at his death, without issue, Aug. 15, 1654, the Earldom expired."

For many years the Fitz Warines held the Manor of Wantage. No trace is to be seen of any family residence belonging to them. *Etiam periere ruine.* Captain Symonds, who visited Wantage in 1644, says, "Upon ye north-west side of ye towne, on a riseing hill, was ye old seate of ye antient family of Fitzwarin, who lived there, and had been the habitation of King Alfred. But was no mention of any ruines." (MSS. Brit. Museum). We are therefore without information as to why and when the mansion was demolished.

In the year 1299 one "John de Wantinge" was elected Second Warden of Merton College. He was in all probability a native of the town, although no record of his birth is to be found.

There were several smaller estates in Wantage besides the principal manor belonging to the Fitz Warines.

i. The Manor of Wantyng Brian.—This manor of Wantyng Brian, or Brian's fee, was so called from a family who anciently held lands in Wantage. In 1232 they were

held by William de Brion. In the reign of Henry VI. this manor belonged to a family named Andrew. Robert Andrew was Sheriff of Berks and Oxfordshire in 1415.

In the reign of Philip and Mary it belonged to a branch of the Baronial House of Hungerford. In the 17th century a family named Brookes, who resided in the town, possessed the estate, which from them, is in some deeds called Brian Brooks.

In 1752 the manor of Wanting Brian was purchased of a family named Graham by Mr. William Stirling, whose son gave it to his nephew, Mr. Crosby, by whom it was sold in 1822 to Joseph Butler, Esq., of Inkpen, in Berks. His son, George Butler, then resided there. It is now the property of Mr. John Brooks. The house, which was built by the first Mr. Stirling, stands in a meadow at the east end of the town and is still called "Stirlings." (Hundred of Wanting, p. 183).

The following records of this manor are interesting :—

Grant by Richard de Bryone, rector of the Church of West Grimstede,\* to Andrew de Grimstede and Alice, his wife, of all his tenement and land in Wanetynge. (No date).

Conveyance by Sir Andrew de Grimstede, Kt., to Henry atte Grene, of Cherltone, and Hugh, his son, of a messuage and croft in Wanetinge, which Maria de Cruce formerly held, paying 8s. weekly. Sunday before the Annunciation, 7 Edw. II.

Grant and release, dated Tuesday before the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, 3 Richard II., by Thomas West, Knight, to Sir Ivo Fitz Waryn, Knight, his heirs and assigns, of [inter alia] the Manor of Wantyngbrian, co. Berks. (Harleian MS. Charter 57. G. 36).

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\* This is West Grimstead, near Salisbury.

Extracts from the will of Sir Ivo Fitz Waryn :—  
TESTAMENT.

" November 6, 1412. Ivo Fitz Waryn, Knt. . . . my body to be buried in the chancel, next my father in the par. ch. of Wantynge, on the north part of the aforesaid chancel. . . . Also I will that my executors make no great expenses about my hearse for pomp of the world, but that they feed neighbours and other poor folk on the day of my burial, so that they pray for my soul. I give and bequeath to the monks of the monastery of Milton, serving God there, that is to say to the convent, to celebrate 100 masses for my soul, 40 shillings immediately after my decease. Item.—I leave to the Abbot of the same place one good silver cup with a cover gilt. To the monks of Cerne xls. immediately, for 100 masses to be celebrated, &c. . . . to each of the Orders of friars of Sarum, xxs., &c. . . . to each Order of friars of Bristol, xxs. . . . to the friars of Yvelchester (Ilchester), xxs. . . . to the friars of Dorchester, xxs., to pray for my soul and that of Maud, my wife. . . . to Philippe Fitz Waryn, my sister, a nun of Wilton, and (sic) my best furred gown. . . . to the church of Sarum, a great missal, covered with red and black bawdekyn, after my decease, to pray for me and my ancestors for ever and to hold my obit yearly, &c., in their default, to abbey of Milton, Dorset, to pray, &c. . . . to every priest of Wantynge abiding there and serving God, 3s. 4d. to 'celebrate and pray for my soul. . . . I leave for the amending of the church of Caundell Haddon, one mark. . . . Also I leave my best vestments of red silk gilt, of one suit, viz., a cope and a chasuble, with the tunicles and all their belongings, to the par. ch. of Wantynge, and there to remain for ever to

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celebrate for the souls of me and mine for ever. . . . Vestment [described in detail] to chapel of St. Andw., Caundell Haddon. . . . I leave to Richard Whityngton,\* my son, a silver gilt piece, ywrite around, with a cover of the same make, and a pair (i.e. set) of paternosters of pure gold, enamelled with clear red, with gawds of pure gold enamelled with white in the form of a head of Saint John the Baptist. I leave to my poor tenants of Wantyng Brian, one mark. to John Chidesk, my son. . . . Executors Richd. Whityngton, citizen of London, and others."

#### WILL.

"Lands in Wantynch Bryen, Berks, in Wilts and Dorset, for a chaplain who (and his successors, chaplains) shall celebrate daily for ever a mass at the altar of St. John the Baptist, founded in the eastern aisle of the parish church of Wantynch to the honour of God and the blessed Virgin Mary and of all Saints, and for the soul of Margaret, mother of Sir William Fitz Waryn, knight; and for the souls of William and Annie, his wife; of Ivo Fitz Waryn, knight, founder of this chauntry, son of the aforesaid William; and of Maud, wife of the said Ivo, and their heirs, and the aforesaid chaplains and succeeding chaplains shall yearly hold an anniversary in the parish church of Wantynch, with the Vicar of the same church and all chaplains and clerks serving in the same church, singing *placebo* and *dirige*, with the new 'lection' and lauds following, *scilicet*, in the night before the Vigil of the Apostles Simon and Jude, &c. Vicar

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\* This was the famous "Dick Whittington," thrice Lord Mayor of London, who married Alice, daughter of Sir Ivo Fitz Warine.

to have 6d., every other ‘capellanus’ 4d., sacrist 3d., and each clerk 1d.”

“Proved Feb. 5, 1414.”

Grant by Wm. York, the elder, and Robt. Repon to Wm. York, the younger, brother of the said Wm., of the manor of Wantyng Bryan, and messuages, land, and rent in Wantyng, which the grantors, with J. Repon, deceased, had of the gift of the said William York, the younger, Katherine, his late wife, and of Margery Langrigge, widow, authorising N. Collys and John Mykenyll to deliver seisin. 3 Jan. 15 Edw. IV.

2. The Manor of Fotteswick, which was at the southern end of the parish, once belonged to the family of De la Ryvere, who possessed estates in Berkshire at the time of the Norman Survey. It belonged to the Yates, of Buckland, in Queen Elizabeth’s reign. This estate is now called “Furzewick” and is no longer a manor.

The adjoining farm of Latton Down (400 acres) takes its name from the Lattons, of Chilton, and Kingston Bakepuze, its former owners. The following “Additional Charter” gives some idea of the amount of land held by the Lattons in Wantage:—

B. M. Additional Charter. 19189, A.D. 1552.

Assignment of dower (after extent made) out of the estate of the late William Latton, gent. (whose heir, John Latton a minor, is a ward to the king), to Margaret, late wife of the said William, and now wife of Richard Alexander, otherwise called Richard Mylwarde, dated 8 November, 6 Edward VI. The dower assigned includes a close or pasture in Wantinge now in the tenure of Robert Aldeworthe of the clear annual value of 20s.; and 2½ acres of arable land,

lying in the west field of Wantinge, abutting on Kytteswell; and an acre of land in the said field under Thorne Dyche; and an acre there in the Furlonge, called Bullasbusshe Furlong; and an acre there abutting on Hedgwell; and 2 acres there abutting on meadow called Clement's mead; and an acre in the lower part of the said field in a place called le Whytefelde; and two pieces of land called 'le Hedlondes,' containing about  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre, in the said field, at the end of Dere Furlonge there; and 3 acres in the east field of Wantinge, abutting on the town of Wantinge aforesaid; one acre in the said field abutting on 'le pownde;' another acre there abutting on 'le newe crosse;' 2 acres there abutting on blendclose;  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acre there above 'le white pyttes;' and  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre there by Newburye way; and  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre in the said field in 'le Dere Furlonge.'

3. The Manor of Prior's Hold.—For many years this manor was held by the Wyrdnams, of Charlton, who became extinct in the 17th century. It then passed to the Prices. The residence was called "The Ham," and many writers identify this with the Priory of Black Nuns, of the Benedictine order, which existed at a place called "Hamme," in Berkshire, as early as the reign of King John. (Speed, Leland, Tanner, and others). Its name of Prior's Hold would rather support this theory, and it is possible that it was a cell to the Abbey of Bec Hellouin, in Normandy, to which the Rectory of Wantage was appropriated. Its position, which is in the midst of verdant meadows, with a trout stream close at hand, is very similar to that of other medieval monasteries, but of monastic remains there is absolutely no trace whatever.

Through the interest of the Fitzwarines the right to hold

a weekly market was granted to the town by Henry III. in 1216.

"Westminster, July 1, 1285.

License for Fulk, son of Warin, to set up booths in his weekly market in the town of Waneting, pulled down by the justices last on eyre in the county of Berks, on a presentment by some rivals that they had been erected by a previous eyre therein, in the time of Henry III." (Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw. I.).

September 12, 1294.

Grant to Fulk, son of Warin, tenant-in-chief, going to Gascony on the king's service, that the demise which he has made for nine years to Master Henry Huse, of the manor of Waneting, which he has ratified, shall in case of his death, leaving an heir under age, be of full force.

Hundred Roll. com. Berks. Temp. Edw. I.

Hundred of Waneting.

They say that Walter Clerk, reeve of Hamund le Straunge, of Wanetinge, took from Mabel Goreshull, arrested for receiving a thief, one mark, so that she might leave the prison, and 20s. similarly from William the reeve and Richard le Pe. Also that William the Mesler, reeve of Fulk, son of Warin, took 4s. as above from William Scalebard, imprisoned for theft. Also that William and Peter Butun, reeves of Wanething, took 6s. 8d. from Richard Rempe, imprisoned for theft as above.

Nov. 25, 1299.

Commission of oyer and terminer to John de Batesford and Roger de Hegham, on complaint that William, son of

Warin and Peter his brother, Simon de Wyke and Robert le Butiller carried away his goods at Wannenting, Co. Berks, while he was in the king's service and under his protection in Scotland.

1325.

Robert Marie de Stevyngton, Edward Clement of Stevyngton, Richard Bontown of Wanetyng, and Richard Feteplace of Hanneye, acknowledge that they owe to the Abbot of Bec-Hellouin £480, to be levied in default of payment on their lands and chattels in Co. Berks.

May 31, 1330.

Grant for the support of herself and her children, until other provision be made for her, to Eleanor, wife of Fulke Fitzwaryn, whose lands are now in the king's hands, of 40 marks yearly from the manor of Wantyngge, late of the said Fulke, with his house there to live in.

Mandato in pursuance to the Sheriff.

June 1, 1330.

Appointment of Henry de Maundevill to hold during pleasure a messuage, mill, two carucates of land, 60 acres of meadow, and £12 in rent in Wantyngge, Co. Berks, some time of Alan de Fitzwarin, afterwards in the seisin of Fulk le Fitzwarin, and now in the king's hand.

Mandato in pursuance to the Sheriff.

1331.

Commission of oyer and terminer to John de Stonore and two others in complaint of Fulke Fitzwarin that John Wyard, John de Alcester, Robert de Welles, Thomas de Wanetyng and others took away a horse of his worth £60 at Wanetyngge, Co. Berks.

Berkhampstead, June 13, 1339.

Presentation of Richard de Burmyngham to the vicarage of the prebendal Church of Wantyng, of the jurisdiction of the deanery of the Church of St. Mary, Salisbury, in the king's gift by reason of the temporalities of the Abbey of Bec-Hellouin, being in his hands as above.

1315. Petition to Clement VI.

Nicholas de Otterburn, Knight, Master of the King's Infants—for an indulgence of one year and forty days to those who visit the chapel of St. Mary, Wanting, in the diocese of Salisbury, on the five feasts of the Blessed Virgin and contribute to the fabric thereof.

1354.

Indult to the underwritten persons to choose confessors, who shall give them, being penitent, plenary remission at the time of death, with the usual safeguards.

William White, Vicar of Wantyng, in the diocese of Salisbury (and others). (Calendar of Papal Registers, p. 527).

Feb. 12, 1462.

Richard Tailleur, late of Newenton, co. Surrey, "capper," for not appearing to answer John Lodelowe, of Hempsted Ferrers, and Richard Baldewyn, of Wantynge, touching a debt of 40s. (Pat. Rolls, Edw. IV.).

Westminster, Oct. 3, 1526.

Thomas Both, of Faller, Berks; pardon for having killed in self defence William Gybbons, of Compton, clerk, who assaulted him at the house of one Ric. Raff, of Wantyng, Berks.

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Jan. 1, 1538.

John Vachell to Serjeant Chalcott.

Some prisoners for "false bruiting" are to have their ears split. All others to be punished at market towns, some in Wantage, Ilyssely—but the least shall preach in the pillory.

1540.

Richard Bryges to Cromwell.

This present Thursday, 15 January, was brought me Sir John Style, clerk, who was before examined by Sir Wm. Essex, and Will. Hyde—Before me, John Warneford and Thos. Myrtle, he is accused by William Warner, of Wantyng, Berks, tailor, and Wm. Townsend, chandler, of saying, "Our Holy Father, the Pope, God save his grace, all things that he did in his time was well done." On being reproved, he said "all who would trouble him for this saying were friends of the devil." The following persons witness against him: Sir Stephen Knight, Clk., Edm. Cope, of Wantyng, tailor, Wm. Styleman, boot maker, and John Cope, barber, of the same town. I have committed the said priest to Oxford Castle.

"In 1555 Cardinal Pole caused an enumeration of the inhabitants to be made, and the population did not exceed 1,000." (Knight's Berks, 117). In 1801 the population was returned at 2,339; in 1821, at 2,560; in 1871, at 3,295; in 1881, at 3,488; in 1891, at 3,669; and in 1901, at 3,766.

The long reign of Elizabeth gives us only two events of special local interest, the first in 1580, the second in 1597.

i. In 1580 the Earl of Bath erected an elaborate cross in

the Market Place. The inscription was fortunately copied by Captain Symonds when he was at Wantage with King Charles I. in 1644.

“Praie for the good Earls of Bathe,  
And for good Master Will<sup>m</sup> Barnabe,  
the Beldar thereof, Ano. D. 1580,  
And for William, Lord Fitzwarin.”

E.B. W.B.

In the “Gentleman’s Magazine” for 1796 there is a print of “the old top stone of the old Market Cross at Wantage.” The information is added that “it has not been standing there for upwards of a century. It appears to be very ancient, but the date is uncertain.” When Mr. S. Lysons visited Wantage in 1800 it was certainly not standing, for in a letter published in the “Gentleman’s Magazine” for 1821 he writes:—

“The fact is I was several days in Wantage when making collections for that town and neighbourhood in 1800, and well knew that the cross did not exist.” The fragment of the cross that was found many years ago in a garden at Letcombe Regis is thus described in the same magazine:—

“The principal of these fragments appears to have been the upper portion of the shaft, and contained, within Gothic niches, rudely sculptured representations of eight of the Apostles, the four Evangelists having probably occupied some other position on the cross. No portion of the inscription remains on any of the mutilated fragments.”

There is no record as to when or why the cross was demolished. Possibly soon after Captain Symonds saw it in its entirety, in 1644, it was destroyed, like so many other “objects of superstitious reverence,” when Waller’s forces

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were quartered in and about Wantage.\* Possibly also, it may have been taken down to make room for the very curious old timbered Town Hall which preceded the ugly stone building of 1835,† and which happily was removed in 1877 to give place to the splendid statue of Alfred the Great which now graces the centre of the town.

2. The year 1597 is made memorable in the annals of Wantage by the passing of an Act for vesting the administration of the "Town Lands" in the hands of twelve "Governors," in order to insure the proper employment of funds, left ages previously for the benefit of the poor and for other charitable purposes. But the events that led to the issue of this Act must first be introduced. "The town of Wantage," says Clarke, "has been fortunate in numerous benefactors." (Hund of W., 184). The gifts of land date back to Henry VI. and Henry VII. and were of considerable value, comprising properties in Charlton, Steventon, Hanney, Letcombe Regis and other parishes. According to manuscript documents in the British Museum and the preamble of the Act itself, the funds had been grossly diverted from the original objects and appropriated by the feoffees or trustees. The chief offender in malversation was William Wyrdnam, as may be seen by the following :—

"A Breif of the Cause for the poore Towne of Wantinge, in the Countie of Berks."

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\* Waller's headquarters were at Wantage in May, 1644 (Clarendon viii. 345), and it will be understood how embarrassed the loyal inhabitants must have felt when called upon to entertain the king's enemies.

† The architect was a Mr. Kempthorne, who used nearly the same designs for Wantage Workhouse and Wantage Town Hall.

"The landes were geven to Feoffees in the tyme of Kinge H. 6 and H. 7, upon trust to charitable uses, yift, keepinge of a Scholemaster, relief of poore, amendinge highwaiies.

"One Wirdman, a man of evell name and fame, indicted for a Comon Barector and a man of a notorious, sedicious and troblesome disposicon, well knownen in the whole Country, by practize procured himself to be a Feoffee and supposed the land to be concealed and w<sup>th</sup> the proffite bought out the concealm<sup>t</sup> and made entayles to his owne children to cutt of all the trust and good uses. And he and his children made their owne gayne of the proffite and Rente of these lands, made leases for triflinge or no consideracon to his children, frends and kyndred without respecte of the Charitable uses.

"The poore people complyned to my L. Keep who directed ltres for examinacon of the cause to my L. Cheif Justice Sr. Thomas Parry and others. They havinge Wirdnam and the poore face to face, these things did appeare to be manifestly true. Thereupon my L. Chief Justice made a certificat that it was meet to have a Corporacon by Acte of Pliamt and named the ps ons with his owne hands that are nowe to be incorporated.

"The pties (plaintiffs) were herd at lardge in the lower house and theire Counsaill. They consented in all pts to the Acte, savinge they would have had more of theire owne children to be of the newe Incorporacon, w<sup>ch</sup> was not meet for many respects. It may please your Lo. that my L. Cheif Justice may be required to certify the trueth of the premyses Or ells Counsail herd for the poore as well as Wirdnam." (Lansdown MSS. 84, No. 23).

In the Acts of the Privy Council, dated May 22, 1587, more occurs on the same subject.

“A Berkshire Case.”

“A letter to Thomas Parrie and Edward Wiseman, esquiers in Barkshire, that whereas their Lordships were informed by the petition of John Parrie, of Wantage, in that Countie, of sundrie wronges done unto him by William Wirdnam and—Cater against the said Parrie, touchinge the sale and conveyance of a parcell of land in that countie, forasmuch as their Lordships could not convenientlie at that present examine the matter in the same petition contayned, both because of her Majestie’s important affaires, and for that the witnesses that ought to be produced for the triall of the troth were not here present, yet verie desirous that the poore man should be relieved in his juste causes, their Lordships thought good to send them the petition enclosed, recommending the matter to their due and speedie examinacion, and accordinglie to require them to take such final order as should be agreeable to justice and equitie or ells to certifie their Lordships what they should have done therein.”

We must believe that there were genuine grounds of accusation against William Wyrdnam, otherwise the Lord Chief Justice and Parliament would not have taken such decisive measures to protect the poor and prevent the alienation of funds and lands. But these three facts should be noted; 1st, that the accused had in 1558 acquired by just title the manor of Charlton (Clarke, 186); 2nd, that the Wyrdnams were a highly respectable family and inter-

married with the Hydes and other families of unblemished reputation; and 3rd, that W. Wyrdnam's own son, Robert, was appointed as one of the first twelve Governors.

An Act of Parliament for the Town of Wantinge, in the County of Berks, passed in the 39th year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, 1597.

WHEREAS diverse Lands, Tenements, and Hereditaments, situate, lying, and being in the several Parishes, Hamletts, Towns, and Fields of Wantinge, East Chalowe, Grove, Charlton, Hanney, Woodhill, and Letcomb Regis, in the said County of Berks, now commonly called and known by the name of the Town Lands of Wantinge, have been heretofore, some in the time of the late King Henry the Sixth, and some in the time of the late King Henry the Seventh, given and granted by diverse and sundry persons to certain feoffees and their heirs then inhabiting within the said Town and Parish of Wantinge, upon special Trust and Confidence reposed in them and their heirs, for employing the Issues and Profits of the same Lands and Premises for ever, to good and charitable Uses within the said Town and Parish: And whereas the same feoffees and their heirs of long time after the said Grant did put in use the said charitable uses of relief of poor people, amendment of highways and maintaining of a Schoolmaster in the said Town and Parish, with the Issues and Profits of the same Lands, untill of late that some few of the same Town have procured themselves and some few of their friends to be new feoffees of the same, and have made, or procured to be made, Gifts in Tayle to their Children and Kindred, whereby the Trusts, Confidences, and charit-

able Uses aforesaid of the said Lands are likely to be interrupted, destroyed, and cut off, to the great prejudice of the Poor and needy people of the same Town, and to the evil example of others: Be it therefore enacted by the authority of this present Parliament, that there shall be from henceforth for ever, Twelve persons within the said Town and Parish of Wantinge, which shall be Governours of the Town Lands of Wantinge aforesaid, which Twelve persons shall have a perpetual succession, and shall be called and known by the name of the Governours of the Town Lands of Wantinge in the County of Berks, and by the same name shall and may for ever purchase, receive, and take, give and grant, demise and let to farm, sue and be sued, implead and be impleaded, in all suits, pleas, and Courts whatsoever and wheresoever within this Realme. And that the said Governours and their Successors for ever shall be a body politique in deed and in name, and shall and may have and use a common Seal to serve for the necessary use and affairs of the said body Politique. And be it also enacted by the authority aforesaid, that Edmond Fettyplace, Esquire,\* John Dolman, Esquire,† Francis Moore, Esquire,‡ Thomas Aldworth, Merchant, Robert Wirdnam, Gent. William Anger, William Talbotte, William Tubb, Richard Webbe, Thomas Aldworth, the younger, Thomas Clement, and John Snodham, shall be the first and present Governours of the said Town Lands of Wantinge, in the said County of Berks. And that so often as and whensoever it

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\* Of Childrey, afterwards knighted.

† Of Frethorne's manor in Childrey.

‡ Of Fawley, afterwards knighted. He was Author of Reports, &c.

shall fortune any of the said Governours to decease, or for any reasonable cause seeming good to the greatest part of the said Governours to be removed, the residue of the Governours for the time being shall and may within forty days next after such death or removing from time to time hereafter for ever elect and choose one other of the better sort of the Inhabitants within the said Town or Parish of Wantinge, to be a Governour amongst the rest, in the place, room, and stead of the party that so shall dye or be removed. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all Messuages, Lands, Tenements, and other hereditaments in the several parishes, hamletts, towns, and fields of Wantinge, East Challowe, Charlton, Stevington, Hanney, Woodhill, and Letcombe Regis; or any of them commonly called or known by the name of the Town Lands of Wantinge, and also one Messuage in Wantinge, and one acre of land in Charlton, called Silverlocks, lately purchased with the Profits of the said Town Lands, to be and continue as part of the said Town Lands, shall, from henceforth for ever, be vested and settled in the said Governours and their Successors, to be by their directions for ever used, converted, and employed yearly, to and for the relief of the poor people of the said Town, and to and for the amendment of the highways of the said Town and Parish, and to and for the maintaining of a Schoolmaster to teach Gramer within the said Town of Wantinge. Saving to all and every person and persons, bodies politick and corporate, their Heirs and Successors, and every of them, (other than the Donors, Givers, and feofers of the said Messuages, Lands, Tenements, and Hereditaments, or any of them, and all such as claim the same or any part thereof from them or

any of them, or from, by, or under any pretended concealment of the same Lands or any part thereof), All such Estate, Right, Title, and Interest, as they or any of them have of, in, to, or out of the said Messuages, Lands, Tenements, and Hereditaments aforesaid, or any of them. Provided always, that whereas diverse several Leases have been made of diverse several parts of the said Lands, Tenements, and Hereditaments, to diverse and sundry persons by the feoffees aforesaid, of which Leases some have been made for good considerations of mony paid, and some other and the greatest part have been made for small or no considerations, to preferr the friends, children, and kindred of the said feoffees, or some of them, contrary to the Trust and good uses aforesaid, Be it enacted by the authority of this present Parliament, that the Lord Chancellor of England, or the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England for the time being, shall and may, within one year next after the end of this Session of Parliament, award a Commission out of her Majestie's Court of Chancery, under the Great Seal of England, to be directed to such persons as he shall think meet, not exceeding the number of seven, and whereof Sir John Popham, Knight, now Lord Chief Justice of the Pleas before her Highness to be holden if he shall be then living, to be one, to survey the said Leases, and to hear and determine the estates, claims, pretences, and titles thereof, and to certifie their doings into her Majestie's said Court of Chancery, which Commissioners or the greater number of them (whereof the said Lord Chief Justice, if he be then living, to be one) by vertue of the said Commission and of this present Act, shall have full power and authority to hear

and determine all and every the Estates, Interests, Claims, and Titles, of the said Leases, and to allow or disallow of them or any of them according to their discretions, and shall and may cause Proclamations to be made in her Majestie's name in open markett within the said Towne of Wantinge, fourteen days at the least before their sitting upon the said Commission, of the time and place of execution of the said Commission, Requiring by the said Proclamation all and every persons that have any Estate or Interest in possession or reversion by, from, or under any Lease or Leases for life, lives, year, or years, of the Land and Tenements aforesaid, or any of them, to attend the said Commissioners, or the most part of them, (whereof the said Lord Chief Justice, if he be then living, to be one,) at the time and place appointed for execution of the said Commission, and then and there to exhibit and preferr his and their and every of their Lease and Estate, together with the just and true consideration of mony or other consideration paid for the same, and to produce his and their Witnesses for proof thereof. And if any person or persons shall fayle of exhibiting his said Lease, Estate, and Interest before the said Commissioners, or the most part of them, (whereof the said Lord Chief Justice, if he be then living, to be one,) at the time and place aforesaid, Then the said Lease so not exhibited shall be void, and the said Commissioners, or the most part of them, (whereof the said Lord Chief Justice, if he be then living, to be one,) shall and may nevertheless proceed upon such other information as they shall have to allowing or disallowing of the same Lease or Leases, Estate or Interest, in general or particular words, as to

them shall seem meet, And after certificate made and returned by the said Commissioners or the most part of them (whereof the said Lord Chief Justice, if he be then living, to be one,) into her Majestie's Court of Chancery, all such Leases, Estates, and Interests for year or years, life or lives, as the said Commissioners or the most part of them (whereof the said Lord Chief Justice, if he be then living, to be one,) shall certify to be by them or the most part of them (whereof the said Lord Chief Justice, if he be then living, to be one) disallowed, shall be void and of none effect. And all such as they or the most part of them (whereof the said Lord Chief Justice, if he be then living, to be one,) shall certifie to be by them or the most part of them allowed and approved, shall stand good and effectual; and in the meantime untill such certificate made, Be it enacted, that the said Lease and every of them shall be of as good force and effect and of no better, as now they are at the time of making this present Act, any thing before in this present Act to the contrary notwithstanding. Provided always and be it enacted, that it shall not be lawful to or for the said Governours or any of their Successors to make any Grants, Demises, or Leases of the Lands and Tenements aforesaid, or any of them, for any longer time or term then for the Term of one and twenty years or three lives, in possession and not in reversion, whereupon the ancient accustomed yearly Rent or more shall be reserved, payable yearly during the said same Terms to the said Governours and their Successors. Provided always and be it further enacted by the authority of this present Parliament, That the said Governours and their Successors

in every third year for ever hereafter, from the end of this present Parliament, shall, before the Bushoppe of the Diocese of Salisburie and his Successors Bushoppes of the said Diocese for the time being, and in the vaccination of the said Busshopricke, before the Dean of the Cathedrall Church of Salisburye for the time being, make and deliver up in writing a true, just, and perfect Accompt of all the Rents, Revenues, Fynes, Issues, and Profitts, which hereafter from time to time shall be collected, taken, or received of the said Town Lands, and of all other Lands and Tenements which they shall hereafter purchase to them and their Successors, and of the bestowing and employing the same; And that every of the said Busshoppes for the time being, and during the vaccination of such Busshopricke, the said Dean for the time being shall have authority by this present Act to hear and determine and reforme the said Accompts according to the true intent and meaning of this Act.

The accompanying photograph shows clearly the two faces of the impress of the Royal Seal of Queen Elizabeth, which is affixed to the Act, and which by its excellent state of preservation bears witness to the care with which it has always been guarded.

The old seal possessed by the Governors is described in the "Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries," vol. xii. (1887-9):—

"This (silver seal) is circular,  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches in diameter and of somewhat unusual design. In the centre is a device representing a man kneeling on the ground with one knee and holding out a cup or bowl to another man



1.



2.



3.

**1 & 2. The Great Seal of England, attached to the Exemplification of the Act incorporating the Governors of the Wantage Town Lands.**  
**3. The Seal of the Governors of the Wantage Town Lands.**

*(Photo by Tom Revelcy, Wantage.)*



who is standing by and putting something into the cup. The men are vested in doublets and hose. The kneeling man is bareheaded, while the other wears a soft felt or beaver hat. Round the central device is a broad pounced band with the letters BARK alternating with the Bourchier knots and two water bougets, also a Bourchier badge. Outside the badge is the marginal legend, "The seale of the town landes of Wanting." The seal probably dates from 1597, in which year the Feoffees or Governors of the Wantage town lands were constituted a body corporate."

An impress of this seal is also shown in the illustration.

#### INQUISITIONES POST MORTEM.

Index. Volume I.

Henr. III., Ed. I. and Ed. II.

Willus Fil. Warini. Wanting maner. extent. Berks.

28 Edw. I. No. 11.

Simon de Brion. Wantinge *manca*.

31 Hen. III. No. 37.

Johns de Ripariis. Foteswik infra domin. de Wantinge.

6 Edw. I. No. 43.

Radus de Gorges. Wantinge terr., &c.

18 Edw. I. No. 16.

Rogus le Bygod Comes Norfolc  
et Marescallus Angliæ et Alicia } Wanetynge unum Feod.  
uxor eius. } 35 Edw. I. No. 46.

Andreas de Grymstede. Wanetinge unum messuag un  
car. terr. 6 acr. prati et 16s. }  
6d. reddit. }

18 Edw. II. No. 49.

## Index. Vol. II.

Humfridus de Bohun Comes Hereford } Feoda.  
 et Essex et Joha uxor eius filia } Waneting, Berks.  
 Rici Comitis Arundel. } 46 Edw. III. No. 10.

Johnes Mautravers Jun. Wanetyng maner. & hundr.  
 1 part 9 Edw. III. No. 38.

Fulco Fitz Waryn. Wanetyng hundred et due partes }  
 maner. }  
 1 pars 23 Edw. III. No. 39. }

Ada de Grym- stede feoffavit Adam atte Forde & Jo- hem de Mere de	Ekensbury, Abboteston & Wanting.	{ terr. &c., ibm re- manent eidem Ade de Grym- stede ut de hon- ore de Waling- ford.	Southton Berks.
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2 part 13 Edw. III. No. 16.

Willus Fitzwaryn. Wantyng un. mess. & una caruc. terr.  
 1 pars 35 Edw. III. No. 87.

Alexander de Chelseye et alii pro priore & Conventu de Walyng-	Wantyng 60s. reddit reman eidem Alex- andro.
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2 part 40 Edw. III. No. 9.

Fulco Fitzwaryn et alii attincti } { Wantyng maner ext.  
 pro Dno Rege. } { Part 24 Edw. II. No. 47.

Johnes Crooke de Grove pro Johnes Cauches Vicar ecclie de Wan-	Wantynggs plac terr vocat Tanheye.
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2 part 50 Edw. III. No. 28.

## Index. Vol. III.

Philip Fitzwarin.	{ Wanting maner tent in socagio de dominio de Penbrok in Wallia. Wanting hundr.
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8 Henry IV. No. 47.

Fulco Fitzwarin Filius et heres } Wanting diversa Feoda et  
Fulconis Fitz Waryn Chivaler. } partes Feed ibidem.

9 Henry IV. No. 36.

Fulco Fitz Waryn Chr. Wantinge maner.

6 Ric. II. No. 37.

Alicia Perrers convict extent } Wantyne maner extent.  
terrarium. } 1 Ric. II. No. 30.

Fulco Fitzwaryn Chr. Wantyng maner.

1 pars 15 Ric. II. No. 23.

Index. Vol. IV.

Thomas Comes Sarum. Hankford juxta } 2 Feod.  
Wanting. }

7 Henry VI. No. 57.

Nichus Carewe arm. Charleton maner ut de  
manerio de Wanting.

11 Edw. IV. No. 38.

Anna quæ fuit oxor Fulconis filii } Wantinge maner extent  
et hæredis Fulconis Le Fitz } partic Wanting partes  
Waryn. Assignatio dotis. } feodor.

14 Henry IV. No. 2.

Ricus Hankeford miles et Anna } Wantinge maner extent  
uxor eius. } cum hundro mercat  
feriis, &c., ptin.

9 Henry VI. No. 54.

Robertus de la Mare. Wantinge maner terr.

10 Henry VI. No. 21.

John Dux Bedford. Wantinge rectoria cum decimis  
garbar et gleba pertin extent  
ibm et in Cherleton.  
Wantinge viccar pentio  
annualis 100s. inde.

14 Henry VI. No. 36.

Edmundus de Mortuo Mari } Wantyng dimid feod.  
 Comes Marchiæ. } per Jo. Erle.

3 Henry VI. No. 32.

Thomas Carewe Chivaler } Wantynge maner membr.  
 et Elizabetha uxor eius. }

9 Henry VI. No. 46.

Robertus Broun. { Wantyng 5 cotag.  
 Wantynge maner. } (deest)

11 Henry VI. No. 6.

Thomas ap Ph Vaughan. Esthanney,  
 Sutton Courtney,  
 West Lokynge,  
 Tulwyke et Growe. } quatuormes-  
 suagia 7 vir-  
 gat terr. 20  
 acre prati  
 ibm et 25s.  
 redd ut de  
 manorio de  
 Wantynge.

11 Henry VI. No. 18.

Robertus Andrewe, Armiger. Wantyng Bryan maner.

15 Henry VI. No. 24.

Fulco Filius Fulconis Filii } Wantynge maner et hundr.  
 Fulconis Fitz Warin mili- } extent cum Feodis ibidem  
 tis et Anna uxor eius. } pertin.

8 Henry V. No. 106.

Fulco Boughchier Miles } Wantynge maner et hundr.  
 Dominus Fitz Warren. } 20 Edw. IV. No. 65.

Johnes Hyde, pro Cantar fundand  
 in Ecclia de Fyfhyde, ad quod  
 damnum. } Fyfede,  
 Grove,  
 Wanting et  
 Westhaney. } 8 messuag.  
 1 virgat et  
 150 acr.  
 terr. et 20  
 acr. prat.  
 ibm.

Henry VI. No. 37.

(Year not given; under the title of "B.")

## CALENDAR OF INQUISITIONES.

Henry VII. Vol. I.

Page 297.

**William Yong.**

Writ de Amotus 3 Feb., 6 Hen. VII.; inq. the last day of October, 7 Hen. VII.

By deed dated 1 Oct., 3 Hen. VII., he enfeoffed Agnes, his wife, William York, James Vyall, and Thomas Say, esqs., John York, and James Hyde, of the under-mentioned lands to the use of his will.

He died 13 Oct., 3 Hen. VII. Elizabeth, Clarice, Joan, and Margaret are his daughters and heirs, aged respectively 14, 8, 5, and 4 and more.

**Berks.**

Four acres of meadow in Grove, worth 4s., held of John Bourghchier, knt., Lord Fitzwaren, as of the manor of Wantynge, service unknown.

C Series II. Vol. 7 (28).

**John Hyde.**

Writ de Amotus, 3 Feb. 6 Hen. VII.; inq., the last day of October 7 Hen. VII.

He died 19 Sept., 3 Hen. VII., seised of the under-mentioned lands in fee.

Oliver Hide, aged 30 and more, is his son and heir.

**Berks.**

A messuage in Wantynge, worth 5s., held of John Bourghchier, knt., Lord Fitzwareyn, as of the manor of Wantynge, in socage, by service of 20d. rent yearly.

A messuage and 3 virgates of land in Grove, worth 20s., held of the said Lord Fitzwareyn, as of the manor of Wantyng, service unknown.

C Series II. Vol. 7. (29).

### INQUISITIONES NONARUM.

Temp. Edw. III.

County Berks. Wansyng.

Thomas Broun and William Broun elected for the county and of the vill. of Wanesyng. And the jury [came] before the Prior of Walynford and his associates at Neubiry, who say upon their oath that a ninth part of the sheaves, wool, and lambs is worth 20s. yearly and no more. And they say that none have chattels but all hold lands.

The following hitherto unpublished records were found after this chapter had gone to press:—

Ancient Deeds. Pub. Rec. Office. A 6195.

[Berks]. Release by Fulk Fitz Warin (filius Warini) of Wythington to William Fitz Warin in tail, of his right in the land and rent which William's father Alan Fitz Warin, had by the gift of his father, Fulk Fitz Warin, in the Manor of Waneting, with all customs and services which the men thereof used to do to the same Alan, and with common for beats in his pasture, and fines for breaking of the assize of bread and ale of the said William's men.

Witnesses—Sir Nicholas de Hanrethe, Sheriff of Berks, Richard de la More, and John de Bagpuz (Knights), John de Copshulle, bailiff of Waneting, and others (named), 5 August, 42 Henry III. Seal of Arms. A.D. 1258.

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Ancient Deeds. Pub. Rec. Office. A 8096.

[Berks]. Chirograph indented, being an agreement between Adam Feteplace, of Oxford (Oxon), of the one part, and Sir William de Valence of the other, made Monday before the Purification, 46 Henry III. (Monday, 30th January, 1261-2) to wit, that whereas the said Adam had demised to the said Sir William a moiety of the Manor of Wanetinge, to hold with him in common together with the other moiety so that they should share equally the profits arising from the said manor, up to a certain term limited in another writing of the said Sir Adam, for the sum of £116 13s. 4d., and the said Adam was bound to warrant, the said moiety to the said Sir William during the said term, and whereas Sir Fulk, son of Warin, within the said term, ejected the said Sir William therefrom, the whole profits of the said manor should be applied by the said Adam to the repayment of the money thus received from the said Sir William, viz. £60, this side mid-Lent next, and the residue before Christmas; and the said Adam should seek to recover the said moiety at law, and if recovered, it should remain to the said Sir William, the said Adam receiving back the money, to be paid at the said terms, even though the said Sir Fulk should make fine with the said Sir William of the said moiety.

Witnesses—Sir Geoffrey Gacelin, Sir Guy de Rocheford, Sir William de Chaberries, Sir Walter de Creppinge, Sir Hamo . . . Sir Jugeram de Vilers, Sir Roger Gacelin, Robert Blund, Geoffrey de Hengesce and others.

## Ancient Deeds. Pub. Rec. Office. A 6532.

[Berks]. Letters patent by the King granting to his brother, William de Valencia, the custody of the manor of

Waneting, until the full age of the heir of Fulk,\* son of Warin, deceased, the King's tenant-in-chief, who had demised the said manor to the said Sir William for six years yet unexpired. Westminster, 19 October, 49 Henry III. Fragment of Great Seal. (A.D. 1265).

John Sudbery of Wantyng, viv. 20 Richard II., is mentioned in Ancient Deeds. A 7888. (A.D. 1396-7).

T. P. M., 15 Henry 6.

Inquisition taken at Faryngdon, co. Berks (writ dated 5 May, 15 Henry 6), 20 Oct. 16 Henry 6 (A.D. 1437) on the death of Robert Andrewe, Esq.

By deed dated at Wantyng, 10 July, 3 Henry 6, 1425, by the name of Robert Andrewe, Esq., he gave to Sir Thomas Joy, Sir Thomas Forturby (clerks), and Thomas Andrewe, his manor of Wantyng Bryan, co. Berks, xc. He died April 13 last. John Borne, son of his sister Agnes, aged 40 and more is his heir.

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\* Fulk Fitz Warine, of Whittington and Abberbury, co. Salop, slain *ex parte regis* at Battle of Lewes, 14th May, A.D. 1264. Fulk Fitz Warine proved his age A.D. 1273. Summoned to Parliament. "Complete Peerage."

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE STUART PERIOD.

The rolling downs of the valley of the White Horse have always been a favourite battle ground when there was fighting to the fore, from the days when Alfred crushed the Danish squadrons to the more peaceful manœuvres of our modern volunteers. Nor did they escape the tramp of cavalry, and the march of footmen, during those troublous years which marked the Civil War. It was at the first battle of Newbury that the gallant Falkland fell. It was at the second battle that Cromwell's difference with Essex led to his political consolidation of power, which had received its military baptism on Marston Moor. The names just mentioned are in themselves sufficient guarantee that the quarrel for which such men were prepared to fight to the death had become irreconciliable. In these days the necessity for the last and sternest arbitrament of war has vanished with the problems, which then brought it upon Englishmen. True, in the United States, within the memory of living generations, men of the same blood and speech have fought against each other, for differing principles in their common nationality. But the youth of the Western Continent have crowded into a few short years the

long experience of older communities. There are some periods of storm and stress that no nation which is worth the making can escape. As a matter of fact no great nation has escaped them. If the constitutional government and the individual freedom which we now enjoy, are owing as much to the "Solemn Remonstrance" of Pym and his followers, as to "Magna Charta," to just as great an extent is the monarchy indebted to the hapless Stuart king, who at the cost of his own life, upheld the principles of Church and State, which he considered the unalienable prerogative of the Crown. It was no question of supplies, no quibble about parliamentary procedure, not even that sacrifice to temporary expediency, resulting in the deaths of Laud and Strafford, which brought the kingdom into arms against its king. The differences lay deeper, and as is usual, they were the differences that remained unspoken. The immediate successors of the great Elizabeth, whose strength was based upon the solid rock of deepest knowledge and keenest sympathy, as to all that concerned her people, never came so close to that people's heart as she was. Your true Englishman has ever a sturdy common sense, a rough and ready estimate of character by results and actions, which is deep seated and not often wrong. We hear a great deal of religious controversy to-day. But we can only faintly imagine what religion meant to the men who risked their all against the Armadas of Spain. To the sailors who fought under Drake and Hawkins their Queen was the visible symbol of their Church, to be guarded and upheld against the world, to be reverenced as an ideal worth dying for. The King to whom the great translation of the Bible is so solemnly dedicated, can

scarcely, it may be feared, have realised all that those splendid phrases meant. His son was perfectly willing to realise them, but not entirely to live up to them. The divine right of kings is a magnificent motto, but it is a hard comparison. To the Puritan in the end it became the merest blasphemy, and it is no slight proof of Cromwell's genius that he saw in the fanatical frenzy of his Ironsides the one thing that could successfully oppose the loyalty of the gentlemen who charged with Rupert. No fact, in war or politics has half the power of sentiment. It was sentiment that won Edgehill for Charles, a flame of loyalty uprose that seemed about to burn the rebels up like chaff. It was no less sentiment that won Naseby. "When I saw the enemy," wrote Cromwell, "draw up and march in gallant order towards us, a company of poor ignorant men . . . I could not, riding alone about my business, but smile out to God in praises." The "gallants" were fighting for a splendid cause, upheld unworthily. There was truth behind the "poor men," and though they went too far, as what men will not? they had more right on their side than their enemies. If it was exaggeration that brought the Cavaliers their downfall, it was no less excess which ruined the Puritans later on.

After Edgehill the King retired on Oxford, and it was during this period, 1643-4, that the rival armies were quartered in or near Wantage. In 1643 the King who had been besieging Gloucester, was compelled by the approach of the Earl of Essex to raise the siege.

The Iter Carolinum, a diary of events, kept by an attendant on His Majesty, records the following entries:—

September 18, 1643.—The King marched to Faringdon,

dinner. To Wantage, Sir Geo. Wilmot's, supper and bed ; 1 night ; 10 miles.

April 10, 1644.—To Marlingborow, the Lord Seymers ; 1 night ; xiii. miles.

April 11, 1644.—To Wantage, dinner ; to Oxford, supper and bed ; 15 nights ; 10 miles.

The next entries are extracted from State Papers.

Oxford, May 2, 1644.—Sir Edward Nicholas to the Earl of Forth, Lord General of His Majesty's army at Wantage. (Instructions of no local interest).

Oxford, May 9.—To the Earl of Forth from Sir Edward Nicholas, " His Majesty resolves to be with you to-morrow morning by 9 o'clock, and desires your Excellency to send him word this night whether you would advise him to come to your lodging at Childrey\* or to Wantage."

May 27, Derby House.—The Lord General Essex and Sir William Waller are both in the field, and joined yesterday. They are about Wantage, near the enemy.

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\* There was at this time living at Childrey a clergyman who is entitled to special note, Dr. Edward Pocock, the most distinguished Oriental scholar of his century. He was born in 1604, appointed Professor of Arabic at Oxford by Archbishop Laud, and made Rector of Childrey in 1642. He was familiar with the Hebrew, Samaritan, Syriac, and Ethiopic languages, and published translations from one or other of them. Shameful to say he was tried at Wantage, before Cromwell's Commissioners, as an " ignorant minister ! " In 1655 he was summoned at Abingdon, under a new act, for ejecting " ignorant, scandalous, insufficient, and negligent ministers." (Maine's Stanford, 79-80, Reliq. Hearn. I. 16-17).

The writer of Dr. Pocock's life in the Dict. of Nat. Biog. says that " his memory is still preserved at Childrey by a magnificent cedar in the Rectory garden."

November 24, 1644.—After our first access to His Majesty we desire to give you an account of that and of our journey, which proved longer than we expected, in regard that we could not gain certain intelligence, where to attend the King. Sometimes we were informed that he was at Wantage or at Farringdon.

March 30, 1646.—The Committee of both Kingdoms to Colonel Rainsborough : “The horse, with Major Sadescue, to join the Hants and Dalbier’s horse, towards Wantage.”

1645.—Letter from John Jackman to Henry Earl of Bath : . . . . “For business Wantage is in a very bad condition, the plague is extremely hot there. Edward Wells called on me to take a cottage, formerly tenanted by his brother, Francis Wells, who is dead of the plague and all his family.”

On August 12th, 1645, the knights, gentlemen, free-holders, and other inhabitants of Berkshire arranged for a general meeting on the Downs, between Wantage and Ibsley. They declared that they had been “for a long time over-pressed with the insupportable burdens, and contrary commands of the many garrisons and armies both of the King and Parliament.”

Their leaders drew up the following humble petition :—

“We the miserable inhabitants of the County of Berks, foreseeing famine and desolation will inevitably fall upon us, our wives and children, unless God of His infinite mercy, shall be graciously pleased to put a period to those sad distractions, are unanimously resolved to join in petitioning His Majesty and the two Houses of Parliament for a happy peace,” &c. The only result of this petition was that the

High Constable of Reading was sent to prison for promoting the meeting. (Hist. MSS., xiii. I 247).

King Charles was entertained at Childrey Manor House by Lady Fetyplace. The Fetyplaces were a most remarkable family, for their ancient descent, aristocratic alliances, acquisition of estates, and public benefactions. The origin of their prosperity, which lasted for nearly 400 years, may be ascribed to the fortunate marriage of Sir Thomas Fetyplace to the widow of an earl (Arundel) and the daughter of a king (John, of Portugal) temp. Henry V. Their descendants intermarried with the Dormers, Jerninghams, Mostyns, Stonors, and many other families of wealth and position. They had property in thirty parishes, four of them close to Wantage, viz., Letcombe Regis, Letcombe Bassett, Childrey, and North Denchworth, and many more within a radius of nine miles, such as Besselsleigh, Buckland, Fernham, Lambourne, Pusey, and Shefford. In Oxfordshire they had houses and land at Swyncombe, Stokenchurch, Dorchester and Swinbrook, near Burford. The three chief seats of the family were Denchworth, Childrey, and Besselsleigh. William Fetyplace founded and endowed a chantry and a school at Childrey in 1526. A Lady Fetyplace gave rich presents to the Church at Stanford in the reign of Queen Mary. Sir John Fetyplace founded a Grammar School at Dorchester, Oxon., in 1653. (Clarke, "Hundred of Wanting," 12, 21, 50, &c. Maine's Stanford and Hist. MSS., xiii., 2, 301).

The Sir George Wilmot mentioned as the entertainer of King Charles I. at Charlton lies beneath an alabaster monument in the chancel of Wantage Church, erected by his son, "William Wilmot, of Up-Lambourne, Esq." The Wilmots

became Lords of the Manor of Charlton after the death of George Wyrdnam, of Farnborough (referred to in previous chapter).

It is nowhere actually stated where the ancient manor house of the Wilmots stood. It is thought by some to have covered the spot which now contains the comparatively modern "Charlton House," the property of H. Denis de Vitré, Esq., J.P., which was originally built by a member of the Price family about the middle of the 18th Century. Others think that an old farmhouse at Charlton which has a lot of oak panelling about it, is part of the old Manor House, but as there is no record one can only surmise on this subject. The Wilmots had property in Grove as well as Charlton. This we learn from a curious paragraph by the gossiping antiquary Hearn, who seems to have been rather partial to the neighbourhood, and was a frequent visitor at Hendred House.\* The Lady Wilmot, wife of Sir George Wilmot, of Grove, near Wantage, in Berks ordered her skull to be preserved in Wantage Church, where she, together with her husband and son, was interred, which skull, according to her desire, preserved in a chest in the Church, the several parts of the skull being described and explained by a surgeon. On it are these verses:—

\* The attraction was Charles Eyston (1667-1721), who is known as the antiquary, and whose life is given in the Dict. of Nat. Biog. The Eystons have been in uninterrupted possession of "Hendred House" and the Manor of "Arches" for 500 years, having acquired the property by marriage with an heiress, in the reign of Henry VI. See Reliq. Hearn II., 106, 108, 138, &c., and III. 208. Several letters of Hearn to "his great friend" Charles Eyston, are preserved at Hendred House. (Hist. MSS., III., 261).

"Ladies, when you, your perfect Beauties see,  
Think 'em but tenants of Mortality.  
I once was as you are, young, fair and clear,  
And you must once be as you see me here."

(Reliq. Hearn, I 135).

No trace of this skull is now to be found, and it is probable that since the days of Hearn it has been interred.

During the Commonwealth we hear little about Wantage, save what will be found in the Chapter on Church History, when Wantage, in common with many other places, suffered from the attacks of the Puritans or Roundheads, who looked on all ecclesiastical ornaments, as "idolatrous things," and destroyed them accordingly. Most Berkshire villages have mutilated pillars, armless and figureless, the remnants of crosses erected centuries before. Their destruction was perpetrated not at the Reformation, nor under Elizabeth, but by the partisans of Cromwell. One particular instance of what happened in a neighbouring town may be cited in confirmation of these remarks. Sir Edward Walker, secretary to Charles I., thus laments the behaviour of the Parliamentary forces at Abingdon, May 31, 1644:—

"While Essex's forces were fighting at Gosforth, Waller's were not idle at Abingdon, who this day plundered that town and sawed down the Cross (standing upon pillars in the Market Place), being the greatest ornament of that place and a goodly piece for beauty and antiquity. An act so barbarous, no people that ever served God (but such an one as they have formed to themselves) would ever have done; who, while they pretend to avoid idolatry, commit all the sacrilege, murther, and impiety that can be imagined." (Historical Discourses, p. 17, London, 1705).

There is no stone cross in its original state to be seen anywhere in the Vale of White Horse near Wantage, Abingdon, or Faringdon, but the late Mr. H. Godwin, author of the "Archæologist's Handbook," informs us that mutilation has not been so general in the neighbourhood of Newbury. "Fortunately," he writes, "a more reverential spirit has prevailed in this district of Berkshire and has cherished the crosses of Welford, Westbrook, Shefford and Lamborne."

The charters of Abingdon Monastery refer to many crosses in different parts of the county; near Shillingford, for example, "andlang weges to thæm Cristes mæle," I. 65; on the Icknield way, near Blewbury, I. 111.; another near Pangbourne (183), and a fourth near Wasing, described in the year 963 as the "old cross of Christ" (338).

By the letter of Jackman to the Earl of Bath, in 1645, quoted on page 75, it would appear that the plague had broken out as early as 1645, but its frightful virulence was not developed till 20 years later. In connection with this first visitation we have the further evidence to be found in the Books belonging to the Governors of the Wantage Town Lands. In the year 1644 a great many payments were made to poor people, especially for "sickness," and such entries only occur at that particular period. In 1665 it was judged necessary to issue a special proclamation to prevent the holding of a fair at Wantage, and this prohibition makes it evident that Wantage was a centre of active business and that people from all parts of the country resorted to its annual fair, which must certainly have been a greater event then than it is now.

"By the King.

A Proclamation prohibiting the keeping of the Faire at Wanting or Wantage, in the County of Berks.

CHARLES REX.

The King's most Excellent Majesty out of his Princely and Christian care of his loveing Subjects, That no good means of Providence may be neglected to stay the further spreading of the great infection of the Plague, doth find it necessary to prevent all occasions of public concourse of His people for the present, till it shall please Almighty God of His Goodness to cease the violence of the contagion which is very farr dispersed into many parts of this kingdom already; therefore, Remembering that there is at hand a Fair of note unto which there is usually extraordinary resort out of several parts of the kingdom, kept at Wanting or Wantage, in the county of Berks, the holding whereof at the usual time would in all likelihood be the occasion of further danger and infection to other parts of the land which yet by God's mercy stand clear and free.

Hath, with the advice of His Privy Council, thought good by this open Declaration of His Pleasure and necessary Commandement, not only to admonish and require all his loveing Subjects to forbear or resort (for this time) to the said Faire kept at Wanting or Wantage aforesaid, or to any other Faire or Faires in the said county of Berks, but also to enjoin the Lord or Lords of the said Faire or others interested therein, that they all forbear to hold the said Faire or anything appertaining thereunto at the time accustomed or at any other time till by God's goodness and mercy the infection of the Plague shall cease or be so much diminished that His Majesty shall give order for holding them.

Upon pain of such Punishment as for a Contempt so much concerning the general safety of His people they shall be adjudged to deserve, which they must expect to be inflicted with all severity.

And to that purpose doth hereby further Charge and Enjoine (under the like penalty) all Citizens and Inhabitants of the cities of London and Westminster that none of them shall repair unto any Faires held within any part of the kingdom until it shall please God to cease the infection now rayning amongst them, His Majesty's Intention being, and so hereby declaring himself

That no Lord of any Faire or others interested in the Profits thereof shall, by this necessary and temporary Restraint, receive any Prejudice in the right of His or their Faires or liberties thereunto belonging, anything before mentioned notwithstanding.

Given at our Court at Salisbury this one and twentieth day of September, 1665, in the seventeenth year of our Reign.\*

God Save the King."

In connection with the Great Plague of London it will not be out of place here to mention that the Earl of Craven built the mansion at Ashdown Park† in order to be able to

\* The King declares this proclamation to be issued in the *seventeenth* year of his reign, whereas he had been only five years on the throne. The date of the proclamation ignores the Commonwealth and places Charles II. as immediate successor to his father in 1648. This calculation is common in wills and deeds of the period.

† When Lord Craven was building the mansion at Ashdown he issued a special permit for labourers to come down from London to Hampstead Marshall. The original document is headed "A passe in the Plage tyme." (Lord Montague's Hist. MSS., printed in 1900.)

live out of the reach of infection. Dr. Gibson, Bishop of London, testifies in his 1695 edition of Camden's Britannia that Alfred's camp is "almost quite spoil'd and defac'd by digging for the Sarsden stones (as they call them) to build my Lord Craven's house in the park." (p. 151).

In 1659 Clement, Bailiff of Wantage, took upon himself the business of proclaiming a County Court at Abingdon, for the election of a Member to serve in Parliament. His action was brought to the notice of the House of Commons, with the result that a warrant was issued, Feb. 2, 1659, to apprehend Robert Clement, and bring him before the Council of State. The keeper of the Gate House to receive the said Robert Clement, committed for illegally proclaiming a County Court at Abingdon for electing a Knight of the Shire to serve in Parliament.

Discharged 14 Feb., 1659.

In 1692, Butler, afterwards Bishop of Durham and author of the Analogy, was born at Wantage, in a house known as the Priory,\* near the south-west corner of the churchyard. Clarke remarks that this learned divine is "the only celebrated person since the time of Alfred the Great to whom the town has given birth." He might well add "*longo intervallo.*" When Lysons wrote his work in 1810, he stated that Bishop Butler's nephew was one of the oldest living inhabitants of Wantage, and a Governor of the town-lands (410). An original painted portrait of the Bishop hangs in the vestry of the Parish Church. Stanford Place, between Wantage and Faringdon, was erected by George Butler, Esq.,

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\* In the Priory, Wantage, a room is still shown as the one in which the Bishop was born, and is known as Bishop Butler's room.



THE RIGHT REV. JOSEPH BUTLER, D.D.  
Bishop of Bristol, 1737; Bishop of Durham, 1750.

(Photo by Tom Reveley, Wantage.)



a direct descendant of the Bishop. The family is now represented by W. Butler, Esq., J.P., of Woolston.

Bishop Butler's father was a shopkeeper in the town, of the Presbyterian persuasion, and had decided to educate his son for the ministry. With this intention, he was (after a few years at the Wantage Free Grammar School) sent to a dissenting academy at Gloucester, which was shortly removed to Tewkesbury. Here young Butler began to show signs of dissatisfaction with the principles of Nonconformity, and with that severe accuracy of judgment which always characterised him, examined them fully, with the result that he determined to conform to the Established Church, and became a commoner at Oriel College, Oxford. Here he formed a great friendship with Edward Talbot, son of Dr. Talbot, Bishop of Durham, and to the patronage of the latter, who was greatly attracted by the young man's cleverness, much of his early preferment was due. He was appointed first to the Rectory of Houghton in 1722, and in 1725, to that of Stanhope, one of the wealthiest in England. It was a quiet place, and Mr. Secker, who was an old school friend of Butler's, having been made King's chaplain, mentioned his friend Butler to Queen Caroline. He was soon made Chaplain to the Lord Chancellor, and a Prebend in Rochester Cathedral was given him. In 1736 he was appointed Clerk of the Closet to Queen Caroline, and in the same year he brought out his immortal treatise "The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature." He attended the Queen daily till the hour of her death, and by that time her recommendation and that of the Lord Chancellor had brought him before the King's notice, and he was raised in 1737 to the See of Bristol. In

1740 he became Dean of St. Paul's, and in 1746 was made Clerk of the Closet to the King. In 1750 he became Bishop of Durham, but took up his residence in Bath, where he died in 1752, but was buried in Bristol Cathedral. He was naturally a modest man, and his piety, though fervent, was unostentatious. His great intellectual strength, and the high dignities to which he was raised, never spoilt his character. In his writings his power of analogy and metaphysical speculation was extraordinary, but his power of thought was greater than his skill in language. It is a noteworthy fact that one of his first acts of patronage as Dean of S. Paul's, was to bestow on his old master, Mr. Barton, Principal of the School at Wantage, the Rectory of Hutton, in Essex.

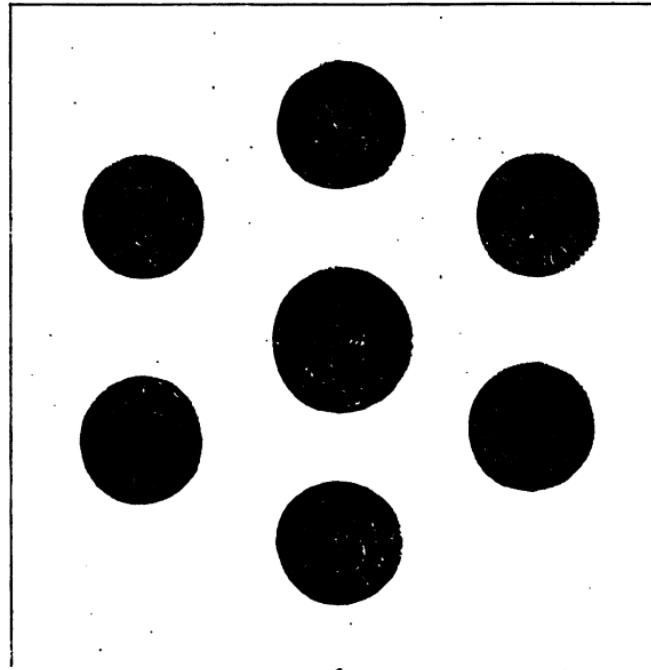
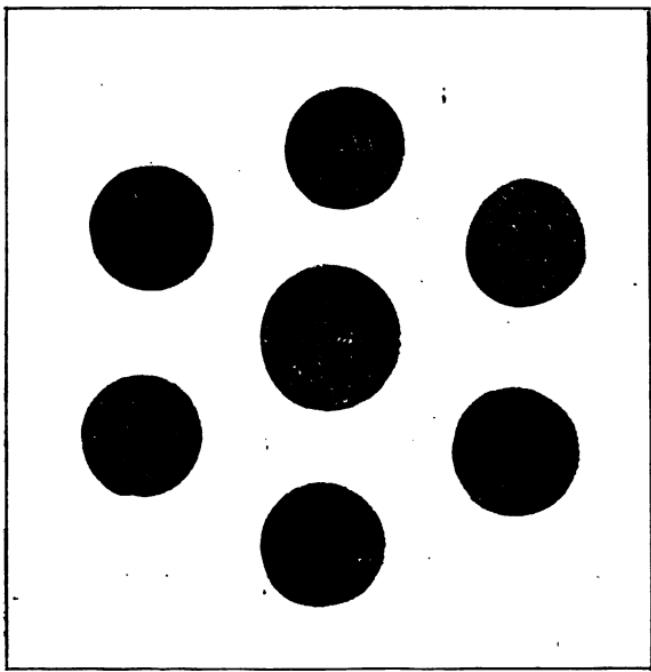
The house in Bath where Butler died was called "Londonderry." It is thus described in "Peach's Historic Houses of Bath":—"On the west side of Kingsmead Square\* stand the remains of an almost unique type of the 'Muscular Architecture' of the early part of the 18th century. Notwithstanding many alterations, the house still bears evidence of its original importance and skilful design." (Peach 40.)

#### WANTAGE TOKENS OF THE 17TH CENTURY.

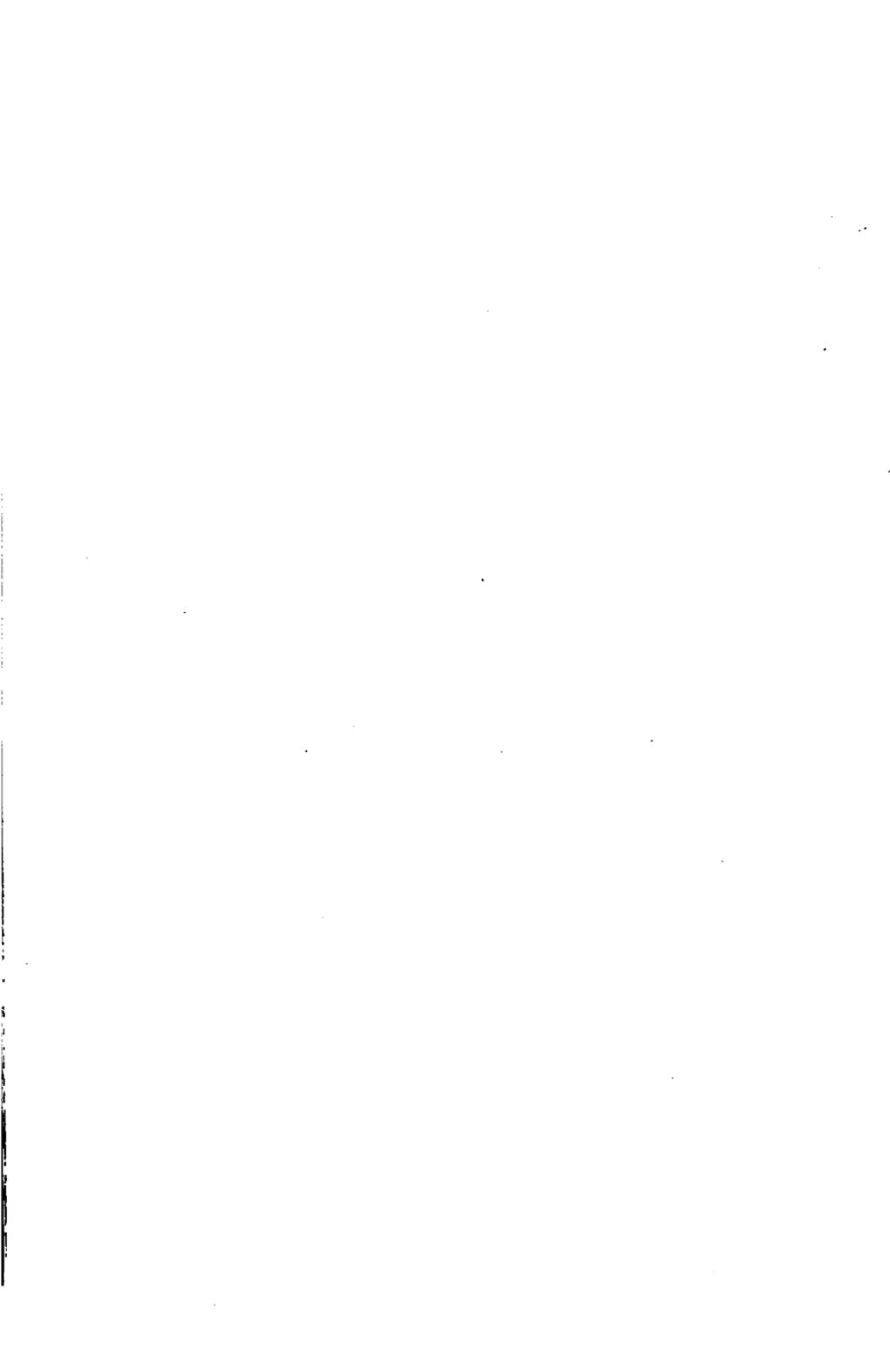
For several centuries, dating from Anglo-Saxon days, the small legal coinage of England was exclusively silver, and was, moreover, represented by pennies only. Halfpennies and farthings were not struck until about 1280, under Edward I.

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\* In the middle of the 18th century, Kingsmead was a fashionable part of Bath. One of the scenes in Sheridan's "Rivals" is supposed to take place close to Kingsmead Square.



TRADESMEN'S TOKENS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.  
*(Photo by Tom Reveley, Wantage.)*



"Edward did smite round penny, halfpenny, farthing,  
A thousand, two hundred, fourscore years and mo.  
On this money men wondered when it first began to go."

Groats and half-groats were issued in the 25th year of Edward III. But during the middle ages all manner of spurious pieces did duty for small change, and were called by such outlandish names as turneys (Tournai), crockards, staldings and dotkins.\*

The first copper farthings were minted in 1613, under James I., and tin farthings in 1625. The first town and tradesmen's tokens were authorised in 1648. They were issued in constantly increasing quantities till 1672, when they were called in by the Government, and replaced by farthings of same size and weight as those in use at present day.

Within two to five years after the issue of tokens was permitted, the tradesmen in every town in Berkshire began to put their own into local circulation, and there were also enterprising tradesmen in several villages who followed suit. There was one such tradesman or innkeeper in Blewbury, one in Hagbourne, Harwell, Longcot and Longworth, and two issuers in Steventon. In Wantage there were ten tradesmen or innkeepers who issued tokens of the nominal value of a farthing, and one other who issued halfpence. The oldest date is 1653; the latest, 1669. A complete list is given in Boyne's exhaustive work on Seventeenth Century Tokens (1858), and is here transcribed:—

112. Obverse. JOHN BEALE. I.B.  
Reverse. IN WANTAGE. (A roll of tobacco.) }  $\frac{1}{4}$

\* The dotkin or dodkin is described in 1700 as "a small Dutch coin, the eighth part of a stiver," and a stiver was equivalent to about five farthings.

113.	O. JOHN CLEMENT. R. IN WANTAGE. I.C. (The Grocer's Arms.)	}	$\frac{1}{4}$
114.	O. WILLIAM CVLLY. 1660. R. IN WANTAGE. W.I.C. (The Apothecaries' Arms)		
115.	O. THOMAS GROVE. T.M.G. R. AT YE (a Crown) IN WANTIDGE.	}	$\frac{1}{4}$
116.	O. JOHN HVNSDON. (The Weavers' Arms.) R. IN WANTAGE. 1667. I.E.H.		
117.	O. THO HVRDMAN AT THE (Bear passant with chain.) R. BEARE IN WANTAGE. T.I.H.	}	$\frac{1}{4}$
118.	O. WILLIAM MASMORE. R. IN WANTAGE. 1653. W.M. (The Grocers' Arms.)		
M.S.	O. LEFFERY MASMORE. R. IN WANTAGE. 1663. I.M. (The Grocers' Arms.)	}	$\frac{1}{4}$
119.	O. IOH SEYMOR AT GOLD (Lion Rampant). R. IN WANTING. MERCER. I.M.S.		
M.S.	O. JOHN SEYMOR AT GOLD (Lion Rampant). R. IN WANTING. MERCE.	}	$\frac{1}{4}$
120.	O. RICHARD STAMP (A fleur de lys). R. IN WANTING. 1669. HIS HALFPENCE. R.A.S.		
121.	O. JOHN WEBB IN (A lion). R. WANTAGE. 1667. I.E.W.	}	$\frac{1}{4}$

Seven specimens of these Wantage tokens are shown in the accompanying photograph:—

1. JOHN BEALE.
2. WILLIAM CVLLY.
3. THO HVRDMAN.
4. WILLIAM MASMORE.
5. IOHN SEYMOR.
6. JOHN WEBB.
7. RICHARD STAMP.

It will be noticed that Seymour and Stamp preferred the old name of WANTING to WANTAGE, while Grove spelt the town phonetically as WANTIDGE. One of Grove's tokens was in the hands of a local collector in 1884.

The tradesmen of Reading spelt the name of their town in seven different ways. The Faringdon people with four variations. The documents quoted in the preceding pages show that Wantage has been spelt in quite a dozen different ways, such as Wanting, Wanating, Wanetinge, Wantyngge, etc.

Of the above Wantage tokens, those issued by William Masmore are of the most interest, because of his benefactions to the church as noted in chapter on Church History. Grove's are also interesting on account of his phonetic spelling.

Very few of the families that issued tokens in our town have living representatives. The only three names seem to be Clement, Seymour and Stamp ; the first in Wantage, the second in Charlton, the third in East Hendred.\*

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\* It may interest our readers to know that the old church clock at East Hendred was made in 1525 by Henry Seymour, of Wantage.

## CHAPTER V.

### **WANTAGE UP TO THE PRESENT DAY.**

After the Stuart period we hear very little of Wantage from outside observers ; but from the minute books of the Governors of the town lands and other sources we learn that the town was by no means in a state of stagnation or decay.

About the middle of the 18th century, the introduction of sacking and twine factories brought much trade into the town, which gained the appellation a little later of "Golden Wantage." Malting and milling and hat manufacture were also largely carried on. Opposite "the Mead" was a cloth mill which was worked for very many years by successive members of the Hazel family. The hemp trade could boast of four factories belonging to Whitehorns, Thatchells, Lovegroves and Hardings, giving constant employment to no fewer than 500 hands. There were three tallow chandleries, and as many as four tanneries, these latter giving their name to "Tanner Street." It is interesting to note that the last relic of these tanneries was removed by the demolition of a wall built entirely of the skulls and part of the horns of animals whose hides furnished the raw material for these works. The footway at Stiles's Almshouses, where the knucklebones of sheep form the sides of the paving, is an

*Photo by]*

WANTAGE MARKET PLACE, A.D. 1835.

[*Tom Ryeley Wantage.*





interesting memento of obsolete trades. In Lewis' Topographical Dictionary for 1831 the town is thus described :—

“The streets are very irregularly built, and contain few good houses ; an Act of Parliament has been passed for paving and lighting it ; the inhabitants are supplied with water from wells, and from a brook which runs into the river. The principal branches of trade and manufacture are those of sacking, twine, malt and flour. Coal is brought thither, and corn and flour and malt sent to different parts by means of the Wilts and Berks canal, affording a communication with London, Bath and Bristol. The Market in which the corn is pitched is on Saturday ; chiefly for corn, also for pigs and cattle. Fairs are on the first Saturdays in March and May for cattle and cheese, July 18th for cherries, and the 18th October, a statute fair ; a cheese fair is also held the first Saturday in every month.”

The greatest obstacle to the development of trade existed in the lamentable state of the roads, and so it became necessary to apply for an Act of Parliament for putting them in thorough repair. This was obtained during the reign of George II., and begins as follows :—

“An Act for repairing the road from Wallingford, in the County of Berks, through Wantage, and thence to Faringdon, and also from Wantage to Idson, in the said County.”

“Whereas the high road leading from Wallingford, in the County of Berks, to Wantage, and from thence to Faringdon, in the said County, and also the high road leading from Wantage to a place called Idson (Idstone), in the same County, are, in divers places, so bad and ruinous, especially in the winter season, that travellers cannot pass without great danger, and the said roads cannot, by the ordinary course

provided by the Laws for Repairing the Highways of the Kingdom, be effectually mended and kept in good repair unless some provision be made for raising money for this purpose." . . .

After this preamble, the Act appoints certain trustees who shall set up turnpikes in any parts of the said roads. It then fixes the tolls for various vehicles, including "chariots," "coaches" and "herses." These tolls are to be used for the repair of the roads, but none are to be levied on election days. The money collected on each road is to go to the repair of that particular road. If the surveyors cannot find enough gravel, stone, etc., on the waste ground, it may be taken from private grounds, satisfaction being made to the owners. The trustees are allowed to divert the roads, widen narrow parts, purchase lands, make ditches, and cut drains, with liberty to sell disused portions. On the road from Wallingford to Wantage they may borrow £1,000. On that from Wantage to Faringdon £500, and from Wantage to Idstone £750. The tolls are to be paid for 21 years, and from thence to the next session of Parliament; but if the roads are sufficiently repaired before that, as judged by the Justices of the Peace for Berks, the tolls shall *cease* (instead of this they were enforced for more than 100 years). The roads are all to be measured and milestones to be erected.

Besides voters on election days, there were exemptions for "Any persons who shall pass through the turnpikes to or from their own Parish Church, Chapel, or nearest place of religious worship on Sundays, or who shall attend the funeral of any person or persons who shall die or be buried in any of the said parishes." At the beginning of the 19th

century, Wantage boasted of few means of communication with the outside world. Railways, of course, had not yet been established, and there were only three very slow means of locomotion. First, there was the Wilts and Berks canal, which was the principal means of conveyance of goods to and from the town. Next there was a coach which ran twice a week to London, starting from the "Alfred's Head Hotel." It is said that in those far-off days, no one ever thought of going to the metropolis without having previously made his or her will, thus showing what a dangerous journey or marvellous event it was considered to be. Then the road waggon, which was driven for many years by a man named "Blisset," went to London once a week, and its "goods' office" was in the yard in Wallingford Street, next to "The Ivies."

During the Peninsular War, a number of French prisoners were kept in Wantage, one of whom was Lieutenant De Gaja, who was one of the bravest officers in the French army. He was taken prisoner at Corunna. On our exchange of prisoners being made, he returned to France, and in 1812 took part in the Russian campaign. In 1817 General De Gaja married Matilda, the eldest daughter of Robert Stephen Fitzgerald, and grand-daughter of the first Duke of Leinster. This lady died in 1850, and the General resided for many years at Pau, in the south of France. His daughter married Mr. Atkinson, Vicar of East Hendred, in 1868, and the General spent the last few years of his life at the Vicarage there, dying on the 31st of January, 1875.

In spite of prosperity, it must be confessed that the town itself remained in a neglected and really discreditable state up to a comparatively recent date. It was the headquarters

of pedlars and hawkers within, and of gipsy encampments without. Hence it is not surprising to learn that badger-baiting and cock-fighting were among the favourite amusements. Bull-baiting was also tolerated in the Parish, in the precincts of an inn known as "The Camel." This inn became the resort of such rough characters, that its licence was taken away, and bull-baiting suppressed.

The Market Place was an uneven, unpaved square, the shop-fronts low, with glass windows having bosses in every pane and heavy sashes. In the centre stood an ugly Town Hall on wooden posts, surrounded by mean shops, representing such varieties of trade as barber, baker, butcher, tinker and coffee-house keeper. These shops stretched out so far that there was not room for more than one conveyance at a time to pass between them and the pavement, while the parish pond, the parish pump and the parish stocks ornamented the foreground. (The last man put in these stocks was put there for drunkenness within the memory of those now living.) There was also a pillory, but we have no record as to when this punishment was last inflicted—probably not since the reign of George III. Certain it is that the pillory was abolished by one of the first Acts of Parliament passed in the reign of Queen Victoria, namely, on the 30th of June, 1837. The punishment of the stocks was continued in places for thirty years later, for an instance is given in the "Leeds Mercury" for April 14, 1860. In nearly all the streets which lead out of the Market Place were barns and other farm buildings, and the "tithe barn" existed at the beginning of the last century.

Perhaps one of the most thriving trades, and the one that outdid all others, was that of malting, from the fact that

most private householders brewed their own beer. There were also numerous public-houses: one of them called "Thatchells," in Back Street, was the origin of what is now the Wantage Brewery Company. There must have been at least a dozen more public-houses then than now, four having been closed in the Market Place, "The Falcon" and "The Globe," which occupied the site of the present Town Hall, "The Crown," now transformed into Mr. Wheeler's premises, "The Lion," which faced the Corn Exchange, and "The Brandy Butt" in Church Street. The excessive supply of beer was the cause of much drunkenness, and scarcely a night passed without brawling and other disorderly scenes.

Fires were of frequent occurrence, and serious crimes brought disgrace upon the town, which at one time was stigmatised as "Black Wantage." A fearful murder, committed at the "Packhorse Inn" (now the Post Office) is still recalled with horror after three generations. Religious influence was at the lowest ebb, for the Vicars usually visited the town about twice a year to collect tithes, leaving the parishioners to the mercy of anyone who could be found to take the services. It is said that in these times, when the "Bow Street Runners" let one of their criminals escape, Wantage was always one of the first places in which they searched for him.

The town was lighted by means of oil lamps which gave only a very poor glimmer, and were of very little service. By whatever means or authority the town was governed prior to 1828, it would seem that it was not of a satisfactory nature, for we find that in that year an Act of Parliament was granted to the town, entitled "An Act for the better Lighting, Watching, Cleansing, Paving and otherwise improving the town of Wantage."

The Act is of a rather voluminous character, containing no less than 104 clauses, many of them being of a very stringent kind, much more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Its opening sentence is very quaint, "Whereas the town of Wantage is a large and populous place," etc., and it goes on to define the number of persons to be appointed and held responsible for the carrying out of its provisions. These were thirty in number, and the qualification to be a commissioner—as they were styled—was either to be possessed of freehold property of the annual value of £20, or to have £1,000 invested in securities. This Act, put into operation at once, swept away the very antiquated custom\* of having night watchmen, who paraded the streets all night long, and called out hour by hour the state of the weather, such as "past 12 o'clock and a cloudy night," or "past 3 o'clock and a fine morning." These men gave way to the appointment of two others, who were the silent guardians of the night, and it was the duty of these officials to

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\* The ancient custom of ringing a bell at eight o'clock is still kept up in Wantage. By some it is supposed to be the Curfew; while others maintain that a sum of money was left by a person who was lost on the Downs, so that a bell might be rung every night from September 29th to March 25th, that its sound might direct other travellers in a like predicament to the town.

There is also a sum of money, the rent of a piece of land in Hanney Parish called "The Bellman's Swathe," to pay for the ringing of a bell at five a.m. from September 29th till the 2nd of February. The object of this is said to be to call the agricultural lads up to attend to their horses.

On Shrove Tuesday a bell is rung at eleven o'clock which is called by many the "Pan Bell," it is, of course, the "Shriving Bell," to call the people to make their confessions before Lent.

attend every morning about nine o'clock at the house of the High Constable, to sign a book and make a statement in writing if anything unusual had come under their notice during the night. There was also a policeman for day duty. This order of things went on until 1856, when the Berks Constabulary were introduced, and the charge of the town was handed over to them to carry on, still under the provisions of the "Local Act."

Wantage was, during the latter part of the 18th, and the greater part of the 19th century, the centre of a very fertile agricultural district. The dress of the people in these days consisted chiefly of smock-frocks and low-crowned, fluffy-looking hats called beavers. The women wore red cloaks, and in dirty weather always wore pattens. So things went on through the entire reigns of George III., George IV. and William IV., and no great change occurred until the Great Western Railway opened their line from London to Bristol in 1840. But though only two-and-a-half miles distant, Wantage was for a long time strangely left out in the cold, the nearest passenger station being at Faringdon Road (Challow). Once a day a small omnibus plodded from Wantage to Faringdon Road to meet the up and down mail trains (about noon). At Wantage Road there was only a goods' office. No platform of any kind was provided for down trains, and passengers had to scramble to and from the carriages as best they could. There was an up-platform, but no waiting room or shelter from wind and rain. The single train in either direction was "Parliamentary," and complied strictly with the rule to stop at every station, occupying eight full hours in the journey from London to Bristol. The opening of the Great Western Railway was at first by no means an unmixed

benefit to Wantage. It resulted, on the contrary, in the gradual decay, and then the rapid extinction of the trades which had given vitality and wealth to the town for one hundred and fifty years. But two things happened to counterbalance the effect of the withdrawal of the maltsters, tanners and hempsters. The first was the starting of an Iron Foundry in 1847 for the manufacture of agricultural implements, and the second was the advent, in 1849, of an energetic Vicar. The Foundry owed its origin and earlier stages of development to Mr. Charles Hart, who very quickly established a wide reputation for two specialities, "The Berkshire Plough" and a thrashing machine. After ten years of success, Mr. Hart disposed of the business to Messrs. P. and H. P. Gibbons—who carried on the works for thirty-one years. The latest event in the history of this Foundry is its transference to Lord Wantage, to be carried on as the "Wantage Engineering Company, Limited." Under such auspices a long period of prosperity is assured for the company and the town.

At the very time that Mr. Hart was entering on his highly successful career, the Rev. W. J. Butler arrived to take charge of the parish as Vicar, and from that time Wantage was launched on a career of improvements and reforms which have never been relaxed up to the present day. The zeal and common sense which always animated him, together with his unflagging energy and perseverance, enabled him during his thirty-four years' work in the town, to completely revolutionise it. At first it was uphill work, but in the end people began to see that the indefatigable Vicar was working hard to elevate the character of the town, and to raise it from the contempt of its neighbours to an honourable position in the county, and to help everything

that would aid its moral and social progress. His efforts met with striking success. Men began to have more self-respect, and women to see that cleanliness and order were more than a "crank" of the Vicar's, but were promoters of greater health and happiness. And so the end has been achieved, and thanks to these immense improvements, the town can now amply hold its own with any other of its size. They have been conspicuous in all branches, in the services and enlargements and adornments of the Church, in the introduction of gas lamps and steam tramway ; in the demolition of insanitary hovels ; in the macadamising of the roads and laying out of paths ; in the erection of Vicarage and Grammar School, the Sisterhood and its attendant schools, suburban villas, public baths, reading room, cottage hospital, flour mills and breweries.

With this new infusion of life into the thriving town which Elihu Barrett and Charles Dickens had dared to call "lazy" and "sleepy," it was natural that its inhabitants should grow more and more dissatisfied with the absence of quick and convenient access to the Great Western Railway. To remedy this defect, the proposal to run a tramway was first mooted in 1874. It was eagerly taken up, and resulted in an application to Parliament for the necessary powers. These having been obtained without opposition, shares were issued, and the work of making the tramway began. Previously to this, in 1863, a proper passenger station had been vouchsafed to Wantage, and a service of eight or ten trains a day started, which was a great boon to the town. At first only horse power was used for the trams, but in 1876 Wantage had the distinction of being the first place in England to run a steam tram. One of the imme-

diate results of this was a revolution in the coal trade, as for the best part of a century, Wantage had been entirely dependent on its canal for the supply of coal—brought chiefly from the Somerset and Gloucestershire coalfields, but from the day that steam locomotion was employed on the tramway, it was rendered possible to receive trucks of coal from all parts of the Midlands.

In the year 1876 Colonel Loyd-Lindsay, V.C., M.P., offered to present the town with a marble statue of King Alfred the Great. When this noble offer was made, the question was, where should the statue be placed? Naturally everyone's thoughts turned to the Market Place, but there in the middle (where the statue should appropriately stand) was the unsightly Town Hall,\* a red-brick building (with shambles underneath) which could only suggest a workhouse. A meeting was held, and after due consideration, it was decided that the old building should be removed. But such a decision was only possible on condition that a suitable site was found for a new Town Hall, and this was accomplished by means of another generous act on the part of Colonel Loyd-Lindsay, who offered the ground on which "The Falcon Inn" then stood. The next step was to open a subscription list, and this was headed by a gift from Lord Overstone and Colonel Loyd-Lindsay of £1,400. The county contributed £700, the Savings Bank Trustees £300, and the town and neighbourhood £925, while the sale of materials of the condemned Town Hall realised £265.

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\* This Town Hall was built in 1835 by public subscriptions at a cost of £600, and was so unworthy of the town that no one regretted its disappearance.

No sooner was the old Town Hall removed than preparations were made for the erection and reception of the statue, and on July 14th, 1877, the Prince and Princess of Wales visited Wantage (this being the first Royal visit to the town for over 200 years), and the magnificent statue of Alfred the Great, from the studio of H.S.H. Count Gleichen, purchased at a cost of two thousand guineas by Colonel Loyd-Lindsay, was unveiled by the Prince amidst scenes of such festivity and rejoicing as the old Saxon town had, probably, never seen before, and has certainly never seen since.

The new Town Hall was opened in 1878. Its architecture is domestic Gothic, much in the style of some of the old Chester buildings, and well in keeping with the antiquity of the town.

In the meantime, about the year 1868, considerable friction was constantly arising between the Town Commissioners and the Lord of the Manor of Wantage, consequent on the power of the latter to over-ride that of the former, the Lord of the Manor claiming to have the power of allowing the erection of stalls, booths, shows, etc., in the Market Place, and exacting tolls through his agents in the most haphazard fashion. This antagonism, or rather dual jurisdiction, was brought to a happy termination by the purchase of the manorial rights from the Lord of the Manor by the Town Commissioners, whereupon the whole of the scale of charges of tolls was reconstructed, and put into a workable order.

In 1886 Parliament established County Councils, and the Town Commissioners had the power to appoint and send a member to this newly-constituted Council, which they proceeded to do. Subsequently, in the next Parliament, Urban

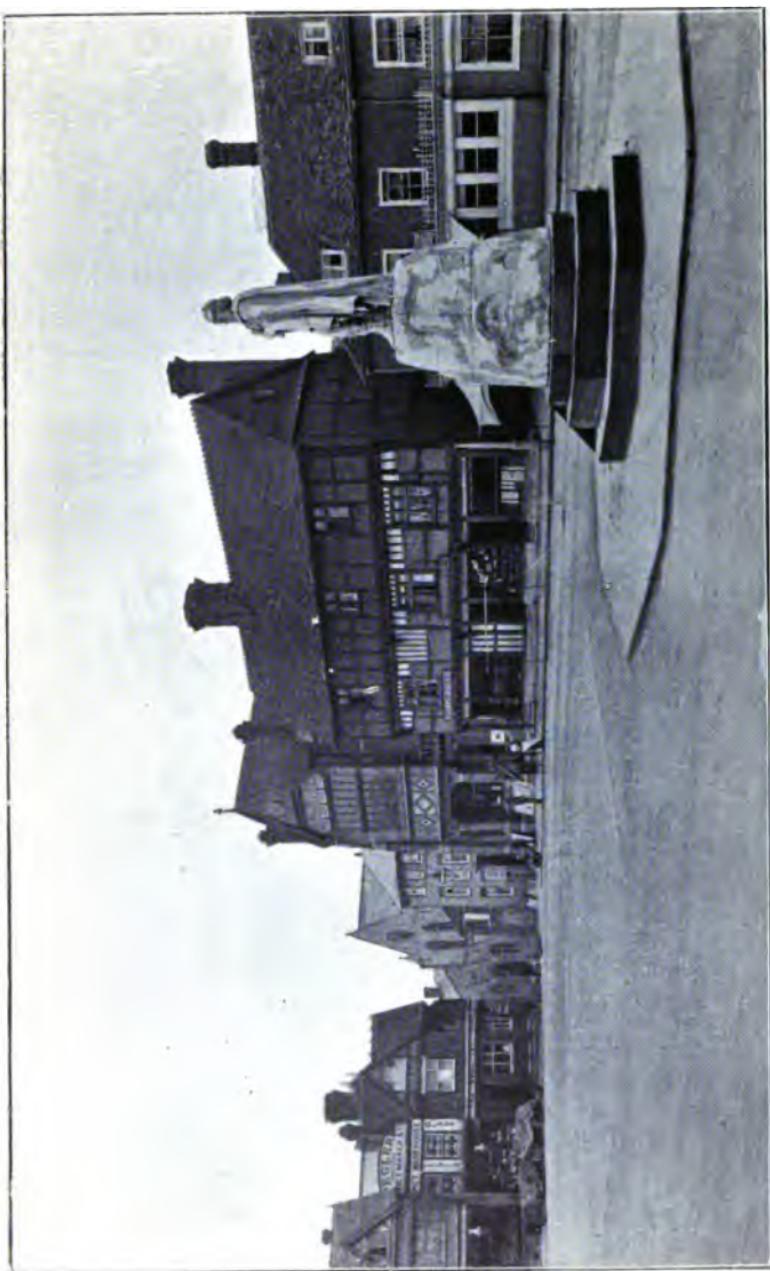
and Rural District Councils were established, and the Town Commissioners became extinct; the choice of the new Council was given to the electors to decide; and the County Councillor also had to submit himself to the electors.

It had been decided that the new Council should consist of fifteen members, and at the first election there were thirty-two candidates. All the old Commissioners (about a dozen in number) offered themselves for election, and with one exception were elected. At the first meeting of the Council Mr. Ormond was chosen Chairman, to which position he has since been annually re-elected. The working of the Act is now well known, and although elections take place annually, consequent on five members retiring, the novelty seems to have worn off, and there has been no contest since the first. This is probably owing to the fact that neither religion nor politics have formed any consideration in the constitution of the Council.

In speaking of the causes which have led to the renewed prosperity of the town in later years, there are two other distinct ones to be reckoned with. First, the large schools which have been erected and maintained by the Community of St. Mary the Virgin, which, together with the Grammar School, are spoken of elsewhere; and secondly, the important racing establishments which, on account of the natural advantages possessed by the neighbourhood, dominated as is fitting by "The White Horse," have sprung up in many of the villages round Wantage. The springy and elastic turf of the Berkshire Downs lends itself admirably for training purposes, and Letcombe,\* Childrey, Lambourne,

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\* The old Moat House at Letcombe Regis which, in the reign of King John, was a royal hunting box, has recently been bought by



*Photo by]*

WANTAGE MARKET PLACE, A.D. 1901.

[*Tom Reeveley, Wantage.*



Ilsley, Compton and Whatcombe have all sent out to the great race meetings in this country and abroad, horses which have made their mark in the sporting world, and whose names will long be remembered in the annals of the Turf. All this has, of course, led to the employment of many hands, and has brought people into the neighbourhood whose interests lie in the "Sport of Kings."

In the year 1885 Colonel Sir Robert Loyd-Lindsay, V.C., M.P., was raised to the peerage with the title of Lord Wantage. This was made the occasion of a great demonstration in Wantage, and an address was presented to the newly-made Peer from the town. The old Market Place was hung with bunting, and was filled with a mighty crowd of those who had come to do honour to the man to whom Wantage owes so much. On the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897, the inhabitants of Wantage subscribed for an illuminated clock, which now adorns the tower of the old Parish Church, and the Swimming Baths were opened, which are an inestimable boon to the town.

In the year 1900 Wantage was further enriched by another handsome gift from Lord Wantage, who purchased the Victoria Cross pictures, which are the work of Chevalier Desanges, and presented them to the town. They were hung in the old Corn Exchange, and the formal presentation was made on November 15th, 1900, when it was decided that the place should henceforth be known as the Victoria Cross Gallery.

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Mr. Richard Croker, whose name is well known in the world of sport. The great improvements which he has made there, including the formation of a lake extending over two acres, have transformed it into one of the prettiest estates in the neighbourhood, and its antiquity will always make it one of the most interesting.

Wantage has always been a very loyal little town, and in all matters of national joy or sorrow has identified itself with the larger towns. When the great Boer War broke out, many from the town went forth to risk their lives for their country, and of these some few laid down those lives for the cause of justice and freedom. When, early in the present century, the whole nation received a shock, such as has perhaps never been felt by any nation in all the history of the ages, in the death of Queen Victoria, who, since 1837, had ruled the Empire with such justice and integrity that she was the idol of her people's hearts, Wantage, with all the world, became a place of mourning, not only outwardly, but in all sincerity.

And so as the years roll on, one can only hope that Wantage will still hold its own, and that in the words of the noble writer of the preface of this work, she may "maintain the traditions of her historic past, and that great names and good deeds may continue to add lustre to her annals."

As an illustration of the patriotic spirit just referred to, the "Reading Mercury" of March 7th, 1798, prints a report which cannot fail to interest at least a portion of our readers :

#### WANTAGE.

"The following sums in aid of the Voluntary Contribution for the Defence of the Country have been subscribed in this Parish, and were yesterday remitted to the Bank of England by the Reverend Edward Shaw, the Vicar :—

	£	s.	d.
Rev. Jos. Butler	...	...	100 0 0
Mr. I. Butler ...	...	...	100 0 0
William Stirling, Esq.	...	...	31 10 0
Rev. E. Shaw...	...	...	20 0 0

		£	s.	d.
Mr. Cowper, surgeon	...	10	10	0
Mr. Warman ...	...	10	10	0
W. Towsey, Esq.	...	5	5	0
Mr. Becket ...	...	5	5	0
Miss Butler ...	...	5	5	0
Mr. Richard Taylor ...	...	5	5	0
Mr. George ...	...	5	5	0
Mr. Trinder ...	...	5	5	0
Mr. Will Belcher	...	5	5	0
Mr. Graham ...	...	5	5	0
Rev. Mr. Robins ...	...	2	2	0
Mr. Will Mattingley ...	...	2	2	0
Mr. Wise, churchwarden	...	2	2	0
Mr. Blackford, churchwarden	...	2	2	0
Mrs. Winkworth ...	...	1	1	0
Miss Martin ...	...	1	1	0
Rev. E. Francis	...	1	1	0
Mr. Ormond ...	...	1	1	0
Mr. O. Yate ...	...	1	1	0
Mr. I. Goff ...	...	1	1	0
Mr. Palmer ...	...	1	1	0
Mr. John Cowper	...	1	1	0
Mr. D. Hazell	...	1	1	0
Mr. C. Parker	...	1	1	0
Mr. Pumfrey ...	...	1	1	0
Mr. B. Hobbs	...	1	1	0
Mr. John Belcher	...	1	1	0
Mr. John Taylor	...	1	1	0
Total ...	...	<u><u>£338</u></u>	<u><u>13</u></u>	<u><u>0</u></u>

## LORDS OF THE MANOR OF WANTAGE.

	Dates.
Barnard Lyford and John Fettiplace	... 1653
John Fettiplace (survivor) ...	... 1654
Edward Hope (in right of his wife)	... 1657
Illegible for some years.	
John Price ...	... 1691
Charles Price	... 1733
Charles Price (son of last lord)	... 1749
John Price (son of last lord)	... 1750
Thomas Giles	... 1764
Susanna Giles	... 1774
Samuel Worthington	... 1782
Henry Fludger	... 1796
Thomas Giles Worthington	...
Charles Worthington	... } 1813
Frances Worthington	... }
John Bunn ...	... 1819
Sir Henry William Martin, Bart.	... 1827
Purchased by Town Commissioners	...

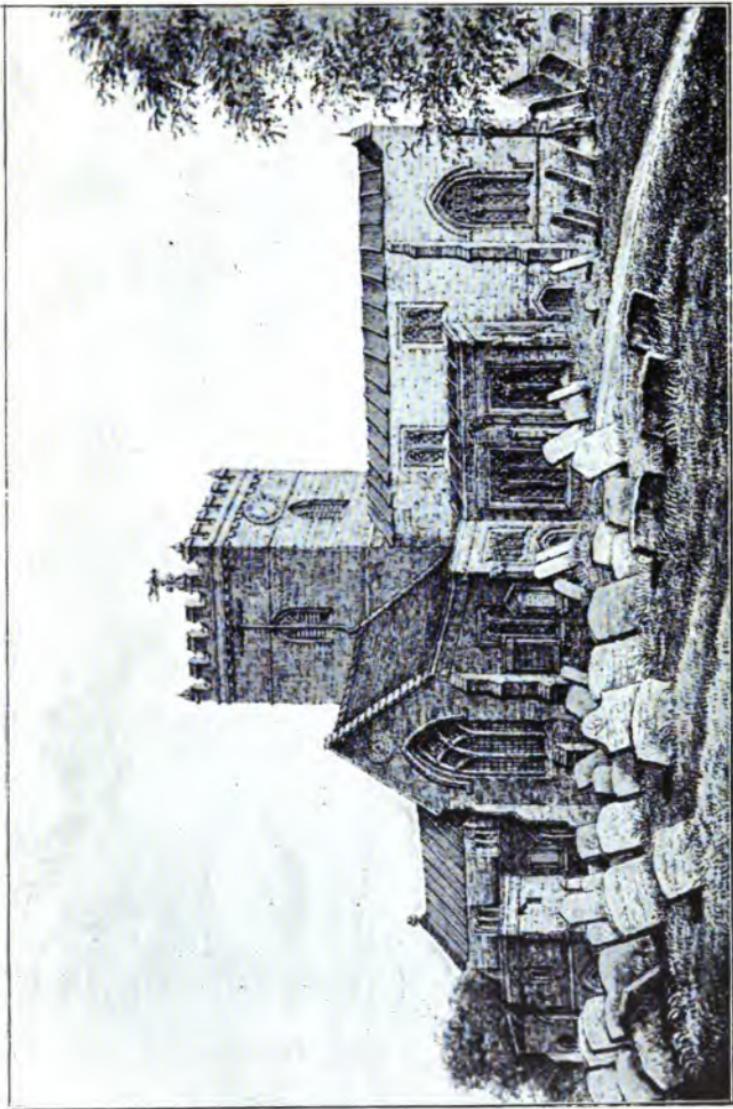
## STEWARDS OF THE MANOR.

George Champion.	William Stirling.
Aaron Jones.	John Barr.
Francis Blandy.	William Beckett.
John Lush.	William Davies.
George Thompson.	William Ormond.

*Photo by]*

WANTAGE CHURCH (from an old Print).

[*Tom Revelley, Wantage.*





## CHAPTER VI.

### WANTAGE CHURCH HISTORY.

When Leland visited Wantage in the year 1534, he found two churches in one churchyard, one of them of small dimensions, and remarks that this latter is “an ancient building now used as a school.” We know that the larger building was founded in 1208, but we have no certainty about the date of the older one. It is a credible tradition that it was built by King Alfred, and, indeed, we may say with perfect confidence, that so Christian a King could not have failed to provide a place of worship for the town that gave him birth and owned a royal residence. In any case, there was a church or chapel at the time of the Domesday Survey, one being expressly mentioned. It may be that the Saxon building was not large enough for the increase of population, and that it became necessary to build an additional church. In 1351 it is recorded that Pope Clement VI. was petitioned by Nicholas de Otterburn, Knight, Master of the King’s Infants, for “an indulgence for one year and forty days to those who visit the Chapel of St. Mary, Wanting, in the diocese of Salisbury, on the five feasts of the Blessed Virgin, and contribute to the fabric thereof” (*ante*, p. 50). This refers to the old chapel, and is an indication

that it had become neglected and out of repair. There is no record as to when St. Mary's Chapel ceased to be used for Divine Service, but probably after one of the enlargements of the church dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul. In the Middle Ages, the Lords of the Manor did not consider their estates complete until a church was built upon them, and hence it is that we are indebted to the Fitzwarins for the existing beautiful edifice, which, standing in the old churchyard, overlooks the town, bearing evidence within and without of the lapse and wear of centuries. The churchyard was, by an Order in Council, closed against interments, October 28th, 1881. The one fact most noticeable about Wantage Parish Church is, that although from time to time various alterations and enlargements have been made, no deviation has been attempted from the original plan, and the beautiful cruciform structure, as it now stands, is merely the completion of the idea which was in the minds of the architect and builders seven centuries ago. Its foundation, as already stated, goes back to the first decade of the thirteenth century, but does not appear to have been completed till one hundred and fifty years later. There is no work in the church earlier than 1208 to 1250, whereas the Chapel of St. Mary undoubtedly contained portions of Norman architecture. Its original north door has been transferred to the Grammar School, and is a fine specimen of true Norman workmanship.

Within the church itself the very earliest work is in the north transept, a fine clustered shaft with cap and base, dating A.D. 1250, which occupies a position seeming to have no relation to its immediate surroundings, and which is all the more curious from the fact that a portion of the arcade above

(but in no way connected with it) belongs also to the thirteenth century. To the same date must be assigned the font, the mouldings of which are enriched by the tooth ornament so characteristic of the period. The tower, with its very massive pillars, is also of the thirteenth century, as are also the arches and columns forming the nave arcade, the arches between the nave and the transept and the arcade on the east side of the transept, all of which belong to the time of Edward I. Doubtless on completion of the thirteenth century work, the general plan of the church was much as it is now—with the exception of the western addition, for although the side aisles of the nave and all the work eastward of the transept, as now existing, belong to a much later period, they are, for the most part, works which have taken the place of previous erections.

The chapel on the south side of the church appears to have been erected about 1450. The ceiling over a portion of it is boarded with oak, and has carved bases which are worthy of careful inspection.

The chapel on the north side is of somewhat later date, the mouldings to the caps and bases of the arcading between the chapel and the chancel seeming to belong to the latter part of the fifteenth or early years of the sixteenth century. There is, on the east of the north transept, a curious and very interesting mingling of work of three different periods in connection with the arcade and adjacent walling. The present north and south aisles of the nave belong to the fifteenth century, and when they were built the roof of the nave must have been removed to make room for the present clerestory and oaken roof. This roof is a splendid specimen of fifteenth century carpentering. The

stone corbels supporting the principals are carved in a manner very characteristic of the date. Upon one shield at the termination of the hammer beams are the Fitzwarin arms. In 1881 the nave of the church underwent alterations, having been lengthened some fifteen feet by the addition of one bay to the arcading. At the same date a greater change was effected in the south aisle ; the porch, with the priests chamber above and the staircase leading up to it, being pulled down and reconstructed some fifteen feet from its original position. There were formerly three galleries in the church ; one—that over the north aisle—which Clarke, in his "Hundred of Wanting," describes as a "low, heavy gallery," was erected by Thomas Gerrard and Joseph Stevens in 1769. The second one, at the west end of the church, was erected principally at the expense of William Masmore, who died November 13, 1707. He was a great benefactor to the town, for he left £100 to the Governors of Wantage Town Lands, and £20 for distribution to the poor of Wantage. The third gallery, over the south aisle, was erected in the early part of the nineteenth century. In the year 1857, the Rev. W. J. Butler, Vicar of Wantage, succeeded after many difficulties in accomplishing the complete restoration of the church, which had fallen into a bad state of repair, and it was then that the unsightly galleries were pulled down.

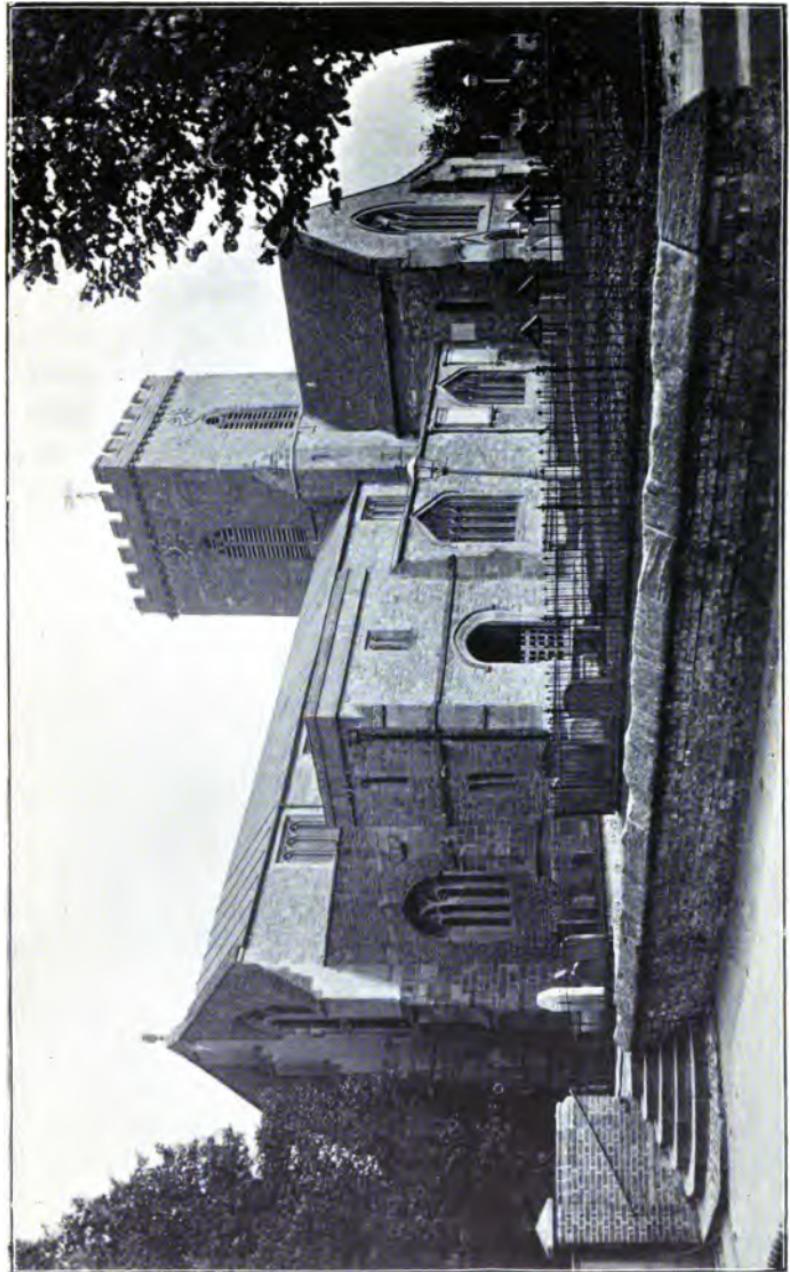
Wantage Church possesses some very fine ancient wood-work in the chancel stalls with Miserere seats elaborately carved, and in excellent condition. There are also screens between the chapels and chancel, portions of which are of the fifteenth century, the rest being restored.

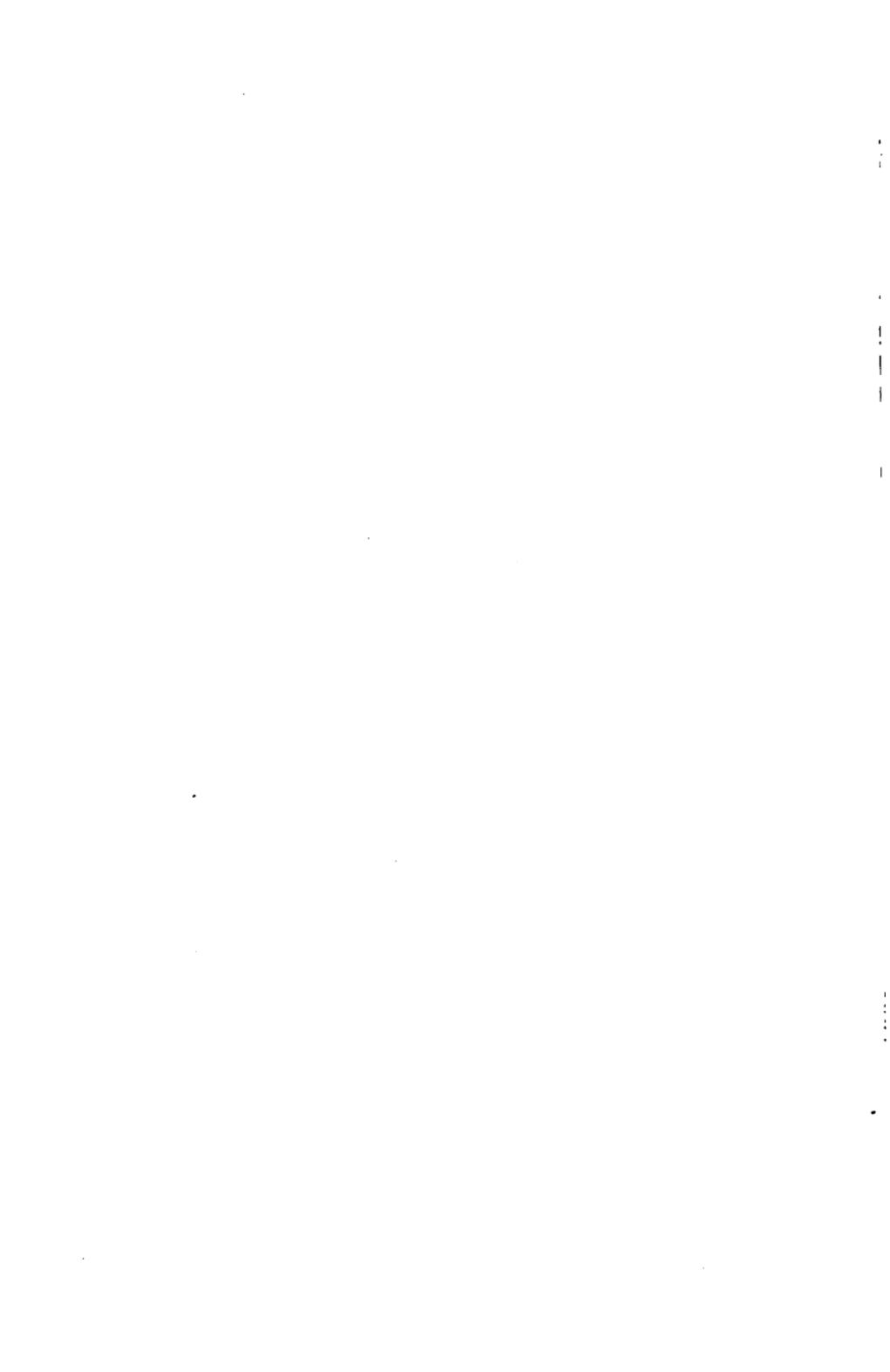
In the year 1892 the tower of the church was found to be

*Tom Reveley, Wantage.*

WANTAGE CHURCH, A.D. 1901.

*Photo by*





in a very unsatisfactory condition. The frame on which the bells were hung being in a rotten state, caused so much vibration when they were rung as to crack the tower masonry. The townspeople subscribed liberally to the work of restoration where needed, besides which the Vicar, Rev. Canon Archer Houlton, presented two new trebles, while the old tenor was re-cast at the celebrated "Whitechapel Foundry," and the fine peal of bells re-hung.

In the year 1895 the south chapel was restored to the memory of Rev. W. J. Butler, Dean of Lincoln, who was Vicar of Wantage for thirty-seven years. A fine oak screen with carved tracery was placed at the west end of the chapel, and the old oak roof with gilded bosses was restored and extended over the whole chapel. The altar, with its hangings and ornaments, were all private gifts. The chapel was dedicated on October 1st, 1895, the Bishop of Oxford officiating. It has since been utilised for the daily services, and is the most fitting memorial to the late Vicar that could have been devised, being in accordance with his expressed wish.

On the occasion of Her late Majesty's Diamond Jubilee, a new clock was subscribed for, and placed in the church tower; the old "carillon" was renewed, and the now familiar chimes were attached. The work was carried out by Messrs. John Smith & Sons, of Derby.

#### THE WINDOWS.

Wantage Church is fairly rich in stained glass windows, though with very trifling exceptions the glass is all of modern manufacture. The east window, which was inserted in 1857, was one of the earliest works of Messrs. Hardman. It consists of five lights, the centre one containing a repre-

sentation of the Virgin and Child. On the right, as you face the window, are St. Peter and St. Andrew, and on the left St. Paul and St. John. In a circle above is depicted the scene of the Crucifixion.

The three windows in the south chapel are by Burlison and Gryl. The Crucifixion over the altar is from Perugino's celebrated fresco in Florence. The two south windows of the Dean's chapel represent—

1. St. John the Baptist and St. Stephen.
2. St. Birinus, of Dorchester, Oxon, St. Wulfstan, of Worcester, and St. Hugh, of Lincoln, representing the three dioceses in which the Dean worked.

The east window in the south transept is dedicated to the memory of Edward Nelson, an assistant priest of the church who died in September, 1859. It consists of three lights, the principal subject being the institution of the Eucharist.

On the south of the same transept is a small two-light window, representing our Lord appearing to St. Thomas, to the memory of "John Brooks, of Stirlings, Wantage, who died 27th July, 1856, and Eliza, his wife, who died 22nd May, 1880."

On the same wall is a handsome four-light window representing the four Evangelists, erected by her descendants to the memory of the mother of the Rev. W. J. Butler, so long Vicar of Wantage. She died on the 24th April, 1884. West of the south transept appears a small window of one light, representing in the lower part a bishop, and in the upper St. Stephen. This is almost the only remnant of ancient glass in the church.

Passing round the church to the south aisle, we find a window placed to the memory of Montagu Wilson Smith,

B.A., who died on the 17th July, 1883. It has four lights, and represents scenes from the Resurrection. Another window on the south aisle, placed in memory of Mr. Wasbrough, represents the Descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

The west window consists of four two-light windows, which contain representations of the four Greek and four Latin Doctors. It was subscribed for at the time that the Bishopric of Natal was offered to the Vicar of Wantage.

Another window at the west end of the church is placed to the memory of Philip Gibbons, of Brooklands, Wantage, and represents the Annunciation and the Visitation.

In the north aisle are two windows, one placed to the memory of Mr. Henry Cook (late Headmaster of the Grammar School) and his son, Mr. Arthur Cook. It represents the Adoration of the Magi.

The other window was placed to the memory of three infant daughters of H. Denis de Vitré, Esq., of Charlton House, and represents the Saviour blessing little children.

On the north side of the north transept is a three-light window, the subject being the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. It was erected in 1875 by the then Vicar of Wantage and his wife and brother, to the memory of deceased relatives.

The three windows in the clerestory represent—

1. Over the lectern, St. Peter, St. James and St. John.
2. The two at the west end represent the three kings and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The church possesses a very fine organ built by Messrs. Allen, of Bristol, and rebuilt in the year 1885 by Messrs. Gray and Davidson, consisting of three manuals and thirty-two speaking stops.

In the nave hangs a very fine brass candelabrum of twenty-four branches, given in the year 1711, John Birch being Vicar, and George Knapp and Robert Price Churchwardens.

#### THE CHURCH PLATE.

Wantage Church is very fortunate in the possession of some very handsome vessels, both ancient and modern, for the celebration of the Holy Communion. What we may call the "old church plate," comprises two cups, a pair of patens, a pair of flagons and three alms-dishes.

The earliest piece of plate is a cup, unfortunately minus the cover, which it must at one time have possessed, bearing the hall-mark of the year 1571. The maker's mark is much defaced, but may very possibly be that of a silversmith, Richard Sutton, who flourished about that period, but about whom little is known, beyond his name. This cup is of the usual Elizabethan pattern, and has upon it the customary ornament, consisting of an engraved band round the bowl, formed by two narrow fillets interlacing and crossing each other at intervals, the space between these fillets being occupied by a scroll of engraved foliage.

Some fifty years later another cup seems to have been procured, very possibly for the reason that when the cup was restored to the Laity, one was hardly found sufficient for the needs of a parish the size of Wantage. This cup bears the hall-mark of the year 1624, and, like the foregoing, has lost the cover, which, there is little doubt, it once possessed. The maker's mark is so much obliterated that it cannot with any certainty be identified. The shape and design do not differ very much from the Elizabethan specimen, but it serves very well to show the difference which we

often find in cups of this somewhat later date, the stem being very much the same, but the bowl having straighter sides, and more of a lip at the edge, without floriated ornament. We may suppose that the covers belonging to these cups were lost during the next century, for we find the church in possession of a pair of patens, bearing the hall-mark of the year 1722, and beneath the rim of each is inscribed "Wantage Church Plate, 1757." The maker of these patens was one John Betts, who carried on business in Holborn.

About this time a large and very handsome alms-dish, ornamented with fine repoussé work, consisting of a lion, horse and stag, together with flowers and fruit, was presented to the church, and an inscription records that it was "the gift of Madam Wilmot, of Up. Lamborne, to the Church of Wantage, 1725." Upon it are engraved the following arms:—On a fess between three eagles' heads erased a unicorn couchant between two fleurs de lys. Impaling: A chevron between three eagles displayed. Upon this fine piece of plate, which weighs upwards of thirty-two ounces, there is no hall-mark.

About the same time that the above-mentioned patens were procured, a very handsome pair of flagons was presented to the church by one Ambrose Clement, in order that the service of plate might be complete. These bear the hall-mark of the year 1744, and were made by one William Williams. They are inscribed underneath with the words "Wantage Plate," and their respective weights viz.—sixty-six ounces, twelve pennyweights, and sixty-seven ounces, five pennyweights. Both bear the sacred monogram, and the words "The gift of Ambrose Clement, gent."

There are two brass alms-dishes belonging to the church, one evidently very old, and ornamented with figures in relief. The other is modern, with an inscription round the rim "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Coming to the modern plate in the possession of the church, we find a very handsome silver gilt chalice, of mediæval shape and design. The bowl is hemispherical, and up the sides proceed six flame-shaped tongues connecting it with the stem. The knob which divides the stem half-way is pierced and embossed, and is, together with the base, which is hexagonal and lobed, ornamented with fine jewels, consisting of amethysts, turquoise, etc. Two of the six compartments of the base have enamels let in, one representing the Crucifixion, so usual in ancient chalices, and the other the Flight into Egypt. This chalice bears the hall-mark of the year 1869. There is a plain paten belonging to it, with one circular depression, and inscription to the following effect:—"Memento Henriettae Ludovicæ Plow quae multa passa tandem in Jesu obdormivit xiv Kal. April. A.D. MDCCCLXIX." The date letter is the same as that of the chalice.

There is another silver gilt chalice and paten, also of mediæval design. They bear the hall-mark of the year 1853, and were manufactured by John Keith, who made church plate at that time. Belonging to the church is also a handsome baptismal shell, mounted in silver and brought from Bethlehem.

#### MONUMENTS AND BRASSES.

In the chancel are the remains of what must at one time have been a fine alabaster tomb. Some small portions of the elaborate canopy exist,—the character of the work upon

---

them indicating that the tomb belongs to about the middle of the 14th century. There is no inscription left, but the effigies are believed to be those of Sir William Fitzwarine and his wife. This Sir William was the 47th Knight of the Garter from the institution of the Order. Captain Symonds thus describes the tomb in 1644.

"Adjoyning to the North Wall of the Chancel is an Altar tombe which formerly was fairly adorned with V on the sides and an arch of stone fairely wrought but decayed. Upon ye surface lyes the two portraits of a Man and Woman, he lying in an old-fashioned Chaynd Armor with his hands a Crosse. Upon his brest is quarterly indented Ermine & . . . . carved, still remaining perfect."

Upon the wall of the north transept is a remarkably fine brass to the memory of the above Sir William's son, Sir Ivo Fitzwarren\* who died in September 1414. In its former recumbent position it represented the figure of a Knight with his head resting on his tilting helmet and his feet on a lion. It bears the following inscription :

In gracia et mia (misericordia) Dei hic jacet Ivo Fitzwarin,

---

\* The crest of Sir Ivo Fitzwarin the son and heir of Sir Wm. Fitzwarin, K.G., was a swan naiant between ostrich feathers. Mr. Beltz suggests that he adopted this crest "out of respect towards his commander the Duke of Lancaster." He was with John of Gaunt in 1385 in his expedition to Castile; but he was also with his banner and pennon, in the retinue of Thomas of Woodstock at the siege of Nantes in 1380 and it was from that commander that he must have derived the Swan." J.G.N., *Gent. Mag.*, Oct. 1842.

[The latter is right. Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, inherited the Swan from the Bohuns and the Mandevilles, who claimed descent from the mythical "Chivaler a Cigne."]

Miles qui obiit sexto die mensis Septembris, Anno Dn Millimo ccccxviii. Cujus anime propicietur Deus Amen.

Captain Symonds has preserved for us descriptions of two other stones.

1. "Round about a flat stone inlaid with brass, this in old text, quondam Vicarius istius ecclie qui obiit vicesimo sexto die Mai Ano dni millimo ccclxxii. Cuius a. p. D.

In ye middle is ye demy picture of a bald-pated priest upon ye top of a crosse."

2. "Upon a flat stone in ye North yle of the Chancel the pictures of a Man and Woman.

Hic jacet Picvs (? Petrus) Davy Carnifex istius ville et Johanna ux eusd (ejusdem) qui quidem Picvs obiit xxvi die May 1493. Quor a. p. D. a." There was under this the picture of a hatchet, Davy having been the public executioner.

The ensuing records of gravestones, brasses and epitaphs are taken from Ashmole (*Antiquities of Berkshire*, 1719) and Clarke's "Hundred of Wanting."

In the south-west corner of the north Chapel attached to the wall is a fine brass of a priest. The date assigned to it in Haine's Monumental Brasses is 1320 (followed by a note of interrogation). There are so few of these brasses remaining that it is very difficult to be exact, but the one in Wantage Church is certainly the oldest of the kind in Berkshire, and is probably the most ancient existing with the exception of that of Richard of Hagbourne in Merton Chapel.

In the middle of the chancel lies a gravestone whereon, under the figures of a man and woman cut in brass, is this inscription — (This epitaph is now placed in the south transept.)

Hic jacet Rogerus Merlawe et Katerina uxor ejus: qui

quidem Rogerus obiit, 12 die mensis Maii Ano Dni MCCCCLX.  
Et dicta Katerina obiit tercio die Januarii Ano Dni MCCCCLIX.  
Quorum aiabus ppiciet Deus. Amen.

On a black marble slab may be read.

"Here lieth interred the body of Helena, daughter of John Lord Paulet, Baron of Hinton St. George, in the county of Somerset, and wife of William Wilmot, son and heir of Sir George Wilmot of Charlton in the county of Berks, Knight, who departed this lyfe on the 12th day of May Anno Domini 1651."

Over the south door of the chancel is a large monument of alabaster and other fine marble on which are three figures:

1. A gentleman with a long peruke, wearing a belt and leaning on a death's head: beneath him is this inscription on a slab of black marble:—

"In memory of William Wilmot of Up Lamborne, in the county of Berks, Esq.; son of Sir George Wilmot of Charlton in the said county, Kt., which William dyed the 1st day of November, 1684."

2. Next stands a child in a shirt loose, resting his hand on a death's head, with this inscription on a tablet of white marble.

"In memory of William, son of the said William Wilmot (by Mary his 3rd wife) who died in his childhood the 22nd day of January, 1666."

3. The third figure represents a woman with a book in her hand and a loose hood on her head. An inscription on black marble bears these words:

"Mary (the 3rd wife of the said William Wilmot, the daughter of Richard Jervyce of Herriard in the county of Southampton, Esq.), erected this monument in memory of

her deceased husband and son." (She died Oct. 22, 1728.)

All three figures are of white marble supporting three angels of alabaster with their wings expanded.

On an old black marble gravestone on the floor is inscribed this epitaph on a brass plate:—

"Of your charitie pray for the Soule of Maister William Gedding, late Vicar of thys church and Vicar of All-Hallowe, Barkyng, which William deceased the xxx day of December the yere of our Lord mcccccxii. On whose Soule IHESU have mercy, Amen."

In the middle ile on an old brass plate, on a gravestone is this inscription:—

"Orate pro anime Johannis Kylbi qui obiit in vigilia Sancti Michis Arch. Anno Dni mcccclxxxi. Cujus anime propicietur Deus, Amen."

At the east end of the south aisle was the burying place of the family of Grove, which derived its name from the Parish of Grove, then an outlying district of the parish of Wantage. The principal monument to this family is one bearing the following inscription:—

"Near this place lye the remains of Francis Grove, an hopeful young gentleman, the eldest branch of the Groves of Grove. He died Dec. 9th, 1738, in the prime of his life, aged twenty-four years. He married Goddard Maria Ready, daughter of Alexander Ready, Gent., by whom he had one son, who dyed in his father's lifetime and lies with him. His sorrowful widow placed this to their memories."

In the same vault are interred the remains of John Grove of Stamwell, in the county of Middlesex, Esq., who closed a life of the most exemplary virtue and unwearied benevolence on Sunday March the 24th, 1805, in the 85th year of his

age. This tribute to his respected memory is paid by his affectionate relative Diana Caswell, daughter of the late Timothy Caswell, Esq., M.P., of Saccombe Park in the county of Herts, who, together with all who lived within the sphere of this truly excellent man, will long cherish the most lively regret for his loss, and a tender recollection of his many virtues."

At the east end of the same ile, on a black marble slab, is this inscription :—

"Here lieth the body of Francis Grove, of Grove, in this parish, Gent. He departed this life the 8th of January 1697, in the 53rd yeare of his age."

In the same ile on a plain gravestone is this inscription in double columns.

"Here lyeth Frances his wife  
who died the 12th of  
September, Anno Domini  
1684.

Here lyeth the body of  
William Hardwick, Vicar of this church,  
who dy'd the 7th of November,

Anno Domini, 1685."

Here needs no epitaph

To make them fam'd.

The Good are praised

When they are only nam'd.

On a small square piece of black marble, like a grave-stone, is this inscription :—

"Here lieth the body of Hannah Tub, who departed this life July 21, 1711, aged 8 weeks.

Not Innocence nor Parents' Love,  
Nor Tears could stay my quick remove."

On a marble monument set in the north wall of the Chancel may be read :

Videte in tumulis proximis ut in amore vivos Johannem Wilson generosum et Mariam uxorem ejus et Matildam filiam ejus unicam; Quorum memoriae suæque pietatis monumentum hoc posuit Edwardus Wilson, SacraeTheologiæ Baccalaureus, hujus Ecclesiæ pro tempore Patronus. Qui de una fidelium Resurrectione certus cum iis intumulari curavit. 1621.

O homo moreris!

The remaining list of interments within the church is taken from Clarke, pp. 196, 197.

At the west end of the south aisle is a vault belonging to the family of Stamp who possessed an estate in this parish. Against the west wall is a monument bearing this inscription:

"Near this place lieth interr'd the Body of Berenburg Stamp, Gent., who died Sept. 13, 1757, aged 37.

Likewise the Body of John Stamp, son of the above Berenburg Stamp, who died July 1st, 1773, aged 22 years.

Also of John Watson, Gent., who died April 12, 1784, aged 31 years.

Mrs. Margaret Stamp, Relict of the above Berenburg Stamp, died Sept. 2, 1790, aged 66 years."

On a monument near the above

"To the memory of John Stamp, Gent., who died July 28, 1728, aged 41. Likewise Mary, his wife, who died May 14, 1728, aged 39. Also two of their daughters, Sarah who died July 8, 1738, aged 17; and Lydia who died June 7, 1741, aged 26.

And also Mary Eldridge, the other daughter of the said John Stamp, who died Aug. 2, 1768, aged 51 years.

Also of John Eldridge, Gent, who died March 10, 1784, aged 66 years.

Mrs. Harriot Eldridge, the second wife of the said John Eldridge, died Jan. 2, 1806, aged 78."

Within the communion rails are several gravestones containing the following inscriptions:—

"In memory of Mary Shaw, daughter of the Reverend Edward and Elizabeth Shaw, who died Oct. 18, 1813, aged 24."

On another

"Here lies the remains of Mrs. Margaret and Mrs. Deborah Trumbull, two loving sisters, daughters of the Reverend Mr. Trumbull, formerly of Witney in Oxfordshire. Deborah died Dec. 13, 1757, aged 76 years. Margaret died May 29, 1765, aged 87 years."

On another.

H. S. E.

"Charles William Malet, who died Jan. 31, 1749, aged 77 years. Also Hester his wife, who died March 24, 1758, aged 74 years."

The following is recorded by Ashmole but was no longer visible when Clarke wrote.

"Pray for the Soulles of Water Tawbot and Alys his Wife, which Water decessyd the 18th day of April, in the yere of our Lord mcccccxii. On whose Soule Jhesu have mercy, Amen."

On the north wall of the north-east Chapel a wooden tablet affixed outside is thus inscribed:—"Between this wall and the pathway were interred from Sept. 20th to Oct. 13th, 1832, the bodies of 16 persons, who with three others, of the same town had died of the Asiatic Cholera—the ravages of which

disease were mercifully terminated by Him who alone could say to the Angel of the Pestilence ‘It is enough ; stay now thine hand.’”

Before the Norman Survey, Wantage church was under the patronage of “Peter the Bishop and William the Deacon,” as specified in the quotation from Domesday at page 37. Peter the Bishop held two-thirds of the land and William the Deacon had the remaining third. Now at this time (the reign of William Rufus) the only Bishop of the name of Peter was the Bishop of Lichfield. He was the 34th Bishop of that ancient See, but removed its seat to Chester in 1102. His successor, Robert de Livesey, removed it to Coventry, when it was transferred back to Lichfield by either Bishop Roger de Clinton or Bishop Hugo Mauvant. It appears that Wantage did not form part of the Bishop’s episcopal property, but was his private possession : hence at his death it reverted to the Crown and remained part of the Royal demesne till Henry V. presented the Rectory and advowson to the monastery of Bec Hellouin in Normandy. It then formed part of the Cell of Okeburn,\* which was the largest cell of that great historic Norman Abbey. It was no unusual thing in those days for foreigners to have the patronage of English livings ; an abuse which caused increasing dissatisfaction to the cultivators of the land, as they felt that the intruders were enriching themselves at the expense of the natives.

In the year 1197 there appears to have arisen a dispute, touching a hide of land in Wantage, between the Abbot of

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\* Ogbourn, in Wiltshire. It was given by Maud de Wallingford to the Abbey of Bec, the grant being confirmed by King Henry II. Dugdale, ap. Clarke, Hund. of Wanting, 135, N.

Bec Hellouin and Baldwin de Bethune, Earl of Albemarle, to whom it will be remembered, Richard I. had alienated the Manor of Wantage from the Crown in 1190. In the publications of the Pipe Roll Society, Vol. 23 (1898) is to be found the following:

“At foot of fines.”

“Decr. 1, 1197.

This is the final concord made in the court of my Lord the King at Westminster on Monday next after the Feast of St. Andrew, in the ninth year of the reign of King Richard, before the Lord H. Archdeacon of Canterbury; Ralph, Archdeacon of Hereford; Richard, Archdeacon of Ely; Master Thomas de Husseburn, William de Warren, Richard de Herriard, John de Gestlinges, Justices, and other Barons and liegemen of the lord the King then present.

Between Baldwin de Bethune, Earl of Albemarle (plaintiff) petent, by Walter de Felton, put in his place to win or to lose, and the Abbot of Bec by John his monk, put in his place to win or to lose, of a hide of land with appurtenances in Wantage. Whereby recognizance has been summoned between them in the aforesaid court as to whether it was the free fee of the said Earl or pure and perpetual alms of the aforesaid Abbot; namely, that the aforesaid Earl has released and quit claimed, in pure and perpetual alms, all right and claim which he had in the aforesaid hide of land with appurtenances in Wantage to the aforesaid Abbot and Convent of the same place, and their successors, of him and his heirs for ever, rendering therefore annually fourteen shillings and twopence for all service to the aforesaid Earl and his heirs at one term, namely at the Feast of St. Michael, and for this fine, concord and quit claim, the aforesaid Abbot has given to the aforesaid Earl fifty marks of silver.”

In the year 1247, the whole town of Wantage paid the Abbot of Bec a tallage of forty shillings.\*

Again in 1325 we find that " Robert Marie de Stevyngton, Edward Clement of Stevyngton, Richard Bontoun of Wanetyng, and Richard Feteplace of Hanneye acknowledge that they owe to the Abbot of Bec Hellouin £480 to be levied in default of payment on their lands and chattels in Co. Berks." (Calendar of Close Rolls). This shows that payments were still made to the Abbot ; and, indeed, they were enforced for another 150 years, that is, until the dissolution of alien Priories by Henry V., when the land became invested in the Crown.

In 1208, Wantage—while still under the patronage of the Abbots of Bec—was made part of the diocese of Salisbury, for we are told that Bishop Herbert Poore (1194—1217), granted the revenues of Wantage to form one of the Prebends in the rich Cathedral of Salisbury. Wantage remained in the same diocese till the year 1836, when it was transferred to the Oxford jurisdiction. After Henry V. had suppressed the alien Priories, he granted Wantage and other possessions of Okeburn Priory to his brother John, Duke of Bedford, by whom they were presented in 1421, to the Dean and Canons of Windsor, who are the patrons at the present time. Another noticeable character in Wantage Church history, contemporary with Peter the Bishop is Gilbert Bassett. Ralph Bassett, father of Gilbert, figures in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. He was a stern judge, for at a court

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\* The Vicarage is rated in the Liber Regis at £35 2s. 8d. The estimated annual value in 1742 was £120. (Clarke, Hundred of Wanting.) The baptismal and marriage entries in the Parish Register begin Oct. 23rd, 1538. The burials commence in 1542.

held at Huncot, in Leicestershire, he condemned forty-four men to be hung and six others to be deprived of their eyesight. The Bassett family was of considerable distinction in Wallingford. Gilbert Bassett, though only a younger son, had seven Knight's fees of the manor of Wallingford. One of the manors was in Ardington. A son of Gilbert Bassett, by name Robert, became a monk at Abingdon, and we have the subjoined references to father and son in the Monastic Chronicle, thus :—

“A.D. 1130—1135. Concerning a certain tithe at Wantage.

A certain knight, Gilbert Bassett by name, made one of his sons, named Robert, a monk in this church of Abingdon. With him he gave for ever a certain tithe of land which he had in the town called Wantage to the use of the poor, and a pound of cheese from his farm, and a tenth of his fleeces and lambs. Also he was wont to give a tenth of his young horses which he had in his stud at Bicester.”

In the list of customary payments to Abingdon Monastery occurs the following :—

“Rents due to the Almoner.

A tithe of the demesne of one hide which Gilbert Bassett has in Wantage.

Tithes due to the Almoner.

These are the tithes which belong to the office of Almoner ; namely, two parcels of the sheaves and all things that are tithed in the demesne of Newnham. The whole tithe of the demesne of Miles Fitz Torold in Chilton. The whole tithe of the Abbot of Chaai in East Hendred, besides a tithe of ten acres which belong to the church of Wantage ; also from the farm of Theosi (?) which belongs to the same lordship,

namely, a pound of cheese on the Feast of St. Michael, 12 lambs and 12 fleeces when the sheep are shorn. And if by chance, by disease falling on them, the lambs and sheep shall be too few, the farmer shall supply a twelfth part in money, both of the fleeces and lambs, together with two or three skins of the dead, but not more. And if on Saint Michael's day he alleges a scarcity of cheese, the aforesaid farmer shall satisfy the Almoner in money, namely, with not less than five shillings.

Payments from these tithes by the Almoner.

These are the customary payments which the Almoner owes for his tithes.

To the Abbot of Chaai in East Hendred and his servants full corody\* at the Nativity of the Blessed Mary. Likewise to the proctors, wardens, farmers and other servants in the lordship of Gilbert Bassett at Wantage, of the hundred of Warenne in Newnham, and of Miles Torrold in Chilton, of which he has tithes. The Almoner shall give six pennies of customary payment to the aforesaid men of Wantage at the Nativity of Saint Mary, and four pennies to the reapers of Newnham when they clear the fields.

It may be mentioned here that a grandson of the above Gilbert Bassett, also named Gilbert, founded Bicester Priory in 1182. One of its Priors was a native of Wantage, who held the office for 14 years, and for whom the following provision was made on his retirement in old age :

“ John Wantyng, Prior of Bicester, not having from any quarter the substance of this world from whence he was able

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\* Corrody. “ Money or provision due to the King from an Abbey or other Religious House of which he is the Founder, for the maintenance of one that he appoints.” Bailey’s Dictionary, 1720.

to support himself according to his proper state, rank and age, hath resigned the said Priory. The Bishop hath preferred to the same Priory Edmund Wycombe, and assigns to the said John for his maintenance a place called the Trymles, situate in the Priory aforesaid, with its garden. Also the said John shall have for the time of his life, for the clothing and stipend of his servant, five marks ; also he shall have four cartloads of firewood from the woods of the said Priory ; and as much bread and butter, fish and flesh, and other eatables and drinkables as two Canons of the Priory have been accustomed to receive. He shall have also every month two pounds of wax candles for his chamber and shall have also every week twelve flagons of beer and thirty-three conventional loaves for himself and servant."

From all which details we may conclude that John of Wantyng had fulfilled his duties as Prior worthily, and that nothing was begrimed him for comfort in his declining years.

The following letters which are copied from old M.S.S. now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford are interesting, as showing clearly the position of Wantage as part of the Cell of Okeburne, belonging to the Norman Abbey of Bec :—

"Reverend and my very intirelie respected brother,—

I have received your letters in particular, and an Abstract in the name of your Chapter, concerning some peculiars of the Deane of Sarum. Wherein, you both conceive, that the Church of Winsor hath a right of Jurisdiction ; and this rightlie understood, was never (as I apprehend) gainsaid by my selfe or any officers of myne. Your Church (for ought I know), might in former times, and in present may exercise Archidiaconall jurisdiction in the places named in your

letters. And soe much hath beene, and without question, is now granted unto all the Prebends of our Church, where yet the Deane hath ever without any opposition exercised his iurisdiction. Such a right is not denied unto you by mee, and this (for ought I can see by your Evidences) is all the right which can from them bee enforced; there is not (for ought I see) any Episcopall Jurisdiction derived upon you by them; such is the jurisdiction claimed by the Deanes of Sarum, and practised by them, through all the times mentioned by you; and if you shall produce the cleare testimonies of evidences, or the uninterrupted exercise of your Church, for the right of Episcopal iurisdiction, by your Church, I continue as my words have formerlie rendred mee vnto you very readie to yeeld to truth, and to quit the cause.

Let mee therefore prevaile with you, yet more narowlie to sift what it is that you take to bee in question, betwixt vs, and if the Episcopal iurisdiction bee it, that you then please to give mee yet a fuller light of Evidence, in writing, or practice, for it, and it shall bee received, and either answered, or yeelded, after your owne manner, with all moderation, and ingenuitie. Soe, with the remembrance of my heartiest respects vnto your selfe, and your Chapter, whom I soe much honouer, I rest

Your very observant frend and brother,  
Ric : Baylie.

Oxon, Mar. 13, 1639.

Mrs. Wren hath the ioint respects of my selfe and my wife, most kindelie presented unto her.

[Addressed :] To his very worthilie honour'd Brother,  
the Reverend Deane of Winsor, these

The Abbot and Monkes Becc Hevlewin, in Normandye,  
of the Benedictine order, held manye convents richly

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endowed with Landes in England: from the times of Ansleme and Landfranke both drawne from thence to the sea of Canterbury whose Rectors of these convents were cald ye Priors Aliens.

Long after the Conquest Herbert, or Herebert Bishop of Sarum, granted to the Becconsian Abbot and his successors for ever to bee Prebends of Sarum, by the Title of Prebende de Okeborne. And by yt name to holde the Churches of both the Okeburns, Hungerford, Shalborne and Wantage, appropri[at]ed to them selves for ever, together with all libertyes and jurisdictions whatsoever. Sub sigillo Episcopali.

Which Grant was confirmed by Richard then Deane of Sarum, and the Chapter under their comon Seale.

By occasion of this Dignity the Prior of Okeborne and his successors were constituted to bee Procurator Generalis Abbatis et Conventus de Becco, per universam Angliam.

In after times the Proctor Generall, being interrupted in the said jurisdiction by Giles Arch Deacons [sic] of Berkes referred the cause of Becco to the hearing and arbitrement of Richard Bishop of Sarum, under a greate penalty to stand to his sentence. Whereupon the Bishop (without more adoe) adjudged the jurisdiction from the Monks to himself and his successors.

The Monks justly aggreeved with this unjust sentence appealed to Gregory the 9th, who by his Papall Bull directed to the Prior of Dunstable, the Arch Deacon of St. Albans and the Deane of Lincoln commanded them to reverse the foresaid unjust arbitrement, and to determine according to equity without further appeale on either side. These Judges restored all the said rights and jurisdictions back

againe with the consent of Robert, then Bishop of Sarum and of the Deane and Chapter to the Abbot of Becco ; and his successors for ever ; who in Recompence thereof, and for their more quiet possession therein, gave the Arch Deacon the perpetuall Advowson of Northmorton, and a mesusage and three acres of Lande, there.

This composition Robert then of Sarum Bishop and the Deane and Chapter there, repeate, and confirme in these wordes :—

Nos, igitur, predictam compositionem, inter Partes predictas, confirmamus, Non novum jus statuendo, sed vetus et quod obscure dicebatur declarando ; Vt predictii Monachii, causarum cognitiones, et alias quascunque libertates, in omnibus et per omnia, habeant et possideant in perpetuum, In predictis Ecclesiis. Ita videlicet, vt iisdem libertatibus, Jurisdictione et Honore, de cœtero vti possint libere, quiete, inconcusse, absque aliqua nostri, vel Successorum nostrorum, Necnon Archi Diaconorum Berks. contradictione, vel impedimento, &c.

Vt autem hac nostra confirmationis pagina, in perpetuum rata remaneat, ad perpetuam rei memoriam presens scriptum, sigillorum nostrorum, necnon Sigillo prefati Ægidii munimine dignum duximus roborandum. His testibus, Petro de Cumber, Galfrido de Bedford, Canonicis Sarum, Magistris Philippo de Sideling, Roberto de Whit Hampton, Rogero de Merleburgo, Petro de Wimborne, Rogero de Middleton, Capellanis nostris, Thoma de La Vile, senescallo nostro, et aliis clericis, Roberto de Freliot, Willelmo de Castello ; Dat. apud Ramisburiam per manum Willuelmi de La Vile, Capellani nostri et Canonici : xi. Kal. Febr Pontificatus nostri Anno 12°.

The like compositions, was then made betweene the said Monkes, and the Arch Deacon of Wiltes to whom in Compensation for the future quiet enjoyment, of the like Libertyes in both the Okebornes them freely gave a Tenement in Inkpenholt called Bartholomewes.

And this composition Together with the two Acts of Renunciation made by both the forsaid Arch Deacons, are likewise :

The jurisdiction thus established, continued in the said Monkes till the dayes of Henry the 5 and the 6th. When all the houses of the said Priors Aliens were confiscate to the Crowne, for takeinge parte with the Frenche, against the King of England :

From the Crowne they come to vs entire, by the Kings Charter, In tam amplis modo et forma ac in manus nostras deuenerunt, &c. saith the Royall Donor :

Against such a cloud of Witnesses, Charters, Patents, evidences and Muments, yf ought can bee sayd to the Church or Deane of Sarum's right to the Jurisdiction, in any of the said forenamed Pecul. Wee shall receaue it with all Fraternal Affection : readily and quietly. Yf not, Wee doubt not, But your integrity will yeeld vs vp the Possession and vse of those rights, our Predecessors in the same have enjoyed these many Ages, and Wee hope you wil interpret this our Just and Peaceable way of clayme, with like Demonstrations of Piety, Justice and Peace, In that wee are all sworne (viritim at our admissions) to holde or Recouer :

Jura et libertates ipsius Capellæ conservabo : deperdita et alienata si qua fuerint, ad Jus et proprietatem Ipsius reduci procurabo, et pro viribus revocabo, defendam pariter et tuebor.

At the close of the Statute of our Royall Foundation,  
next after the Kings Confirmation under the Broade Seale,  
these two are likewise annexed.

But of all this wee thought fit, to inform you first of all  
the Lord Keeper visitor of this his Majestyes Royall Chappel  
And forbearing as yet To crave the Assistance of the R.  
Honorable Sir Fr. Windebanke H. Steward of our Lands  
and Libertyes, In hope wee shall need noe other judges of  
soe greate *Æquity* than your selfe, And to (?) desire to  
heare from you a full and satisfactory answere, with such  
convenient speed, as you may well afford to

Your very lovinge and respectful freinds

The Deane and Canons of Windsor.

Reverend Brother,

I know you have not wholy forgotten the Treaty, which  
I had with you in your walkes at Sarum about 3 yeares agoe  
touching the Peculiars of the 2 Okebornes, Hungerford,  
Shalborne, Wantage, &c, : Wherein of later times some of  
your Predecessors the Deanes of Sarum, haue de facto  
exercised a kinde of Jurisdiction without any right or  
warranty therunto, as wee hope wil bee freindly yeelded :  
when the evidences wherby wee holde those Peculiars, shall  
bee produced : During Doctor Theafes Patent which his  
Death hath cassated Itt concernd Him, to vindicate the right  
Hee held vnder vs, And itt seemes Hee did make his clayme in  
a very Peacefull waye, To which your Predecessor Dr. Tucker  
made a very faire and kindly answere, Promising that they  
would seriously consider his Allegations, and yf they appeared  
to bee just, They would forthwith, not only forbeare to meddle,  
But would readily disclayme, and renounce any further vsage  
of Jurisdiction in the Places formentioned : But this was

neuer yet done, Nor any other answeres afforded vs. Our Chapter have vnamously requested to know what answeres you will bee pleased to afford vs; who have every one of vs, this Spurr in our sides, at the time of our sworne admission. Si qua deperdita, &c.

These 5 impropriations within the Diocese of Sarum together with some others, elsewhere, came vnto vs, from the Benedictine Monkes of Becc in Normandy What time the Priors Aliens (for taking the French Kings Parte, against Henry the Vth and VI) were banished out of England, there Houses dissolued, there Lands confiscated to the Crowne, and from thence Parte of them given to us by Charter in tam amplis modo et forma ac in manus nostras deuenerunt. Now for many ages, before that time, the Abbat of Becco was Prebend of Sarum, by the Concession of Herebert Bishop there vnder, together with the Consent and confirmation of Richard Deane of Sarum.

Reverend Brother,

You will bee pleased to recall to minde, that In a treaty with you in your owne walkes at Sarum neere 4 yeares agoe, I acquainted you, how much our Colledge of Windsor, had of late yeares suffered, by the encroachment of some of your Officers into the Jurisdiction of our Peculiars in Wantage, Hungerford, Shalborne, and both the Okeborne, without the least ground of a just Plea, for what they doe de facto practise vpon vs. I could not but rest fully satisfied with the faire answeres you gaue mee. That yf it did appeare by cleere evidence, that these Peculiars did belong vnto Windsor (of auncient right) you would soone giue vp the cause. Thus much I imparted to our Chapiter, who knew not well how to meddle with it, while Doctor Sheafe

(our Patentee) was Liuinge : But since his Death They have joyntly entreated mee that together with their Respects, I should tender you this Abstract in their Names : Which I shall desire you to peruse ; That I may receive an answere from you, before the 13th of April nexte what time our Greate Chapiter opens. They thought fit to referr the aggitation of the matter to Doctor Sheafe then our Patentee in those Peculiars ; How farr Hee hath gon in itt wee knowe not : But imagine, that itt did not well agree with his greate Age, and quiet disposition to make much stirr, about the Title of right, The Chapiter ergo haue earnestly importund mee, to [the letter ends abruptly thus] :

33us dies Bissextilis, est omittendus.

#### WANTAGE VICARAGE.

When Mr. Butler first came to Wantage he found the Vicarage, which stood immediately at the West end of the Church, in a terrible state of delapidation. He himself described it in those early days as "the coldest house I ever was in." It was pulled down in the year 1850, when the present Vicarage was built on the north-west side of the church. It was designed by Street, and the money borrowed for it was entirely repaid during Mr. Butler's residence there, so that he left it entirely unfettered. The ground upon which the old Vicarage stood is now occupied by an avenue of limes. It is interesting to note that when the old house was pulled down traces of Elizabethan building were found in the rafters of the roof—proving its date to be the 16th century.

#### LIST OF VICARS OF WANTAGE.

1339. Richard de Burmyngham presented to the vicarage of the Prebendal church of Wantyng of the jurisdiction

of the Deanery of the Church of S. Mary, Salisbury, in the King's gift, by reason of the temporalities of the Abbey of Bec Hellouin being in his hands. (Calendar of Patent Rolls 1338-1340.

1354. Calendar of Papal Registers.

Among the "Indults to the underwritten persons, to choose confessors, who shall give them being penitent plenary remission at the hour of death with the usual safeguards."

William White, Vicar of Wantyng, in the Diocese of Salisbury.

GEDDING, Rev. Wm.; also instituted Vicar of Allhallows, Barking, Oct. 23, 1504; died Dec. 30, 1512.

STEYLE, Sir John, clerk, 1540, (? see note.)

HAYNES, Rev. Simon, inducted June 21, 1547, died about Oct., 1552.

STONING, Rev. Oliver, inducted Nov. 10, instituted Nov. 17, 1552, buried Nov. 11, 1560.

Rowe, Rev. Thos., instituted June 30, inducted Sept. 25, 1554.

SOMER, Rev. Richard, died about Sept. 1557.

SHEPPER, Rev. Richard, instituted Oct. 8, 1557, inducted Feb. 4th, 1561 (new style), died about April, 1582.

BOSTON, Rev. Geo., inducted May 16, instituted Aug. 16, 1582, resigned about May, 1583.

WYTHEM, Rev. John, inducted July 21 or 31, 1582, instituted June 10, 1583, resigned about July, 1594.

WILSON, Rev. Robert, instituted Aug. 9, 1594, inducted Feb. 14, 1595 (new style).

WILSON, Rev. Edward, instituted June 29, inducted Nov. 28, 1620.

POTMAN, Rev. Richard, instituted July 11, 1621.

SLADE, Rev. Fras., instituted March 1, inducted June 28 1622; died Feb. 12 1668 (new style).

HARDWICK, Rev. Wm., instituted June 15, 1669, (new style), died Nov. 7, 1685.

WICKART, Rev. John, instituted March 4, 1686 (new style) resigned about Jan., 1692 (new style).

BIRCH, Rev. John, instituted Feb. 22, 1692 (new style), buried June 3, 1728.

BREWER, Rev. Thos., instituted Oct. 31, 1728, buried Jan. 15, 1755.

SAUNDERS, Rev. Dr. Erasmus, instituted April 4th, 1755, resigned about Aug. 1756.

SEYMOUR, Rev. Rt. Hon., Lord Fras. Seymour, instituted Sept. 14, 1756, resigned about Ap. 1778.

HURDIS, Rev. Thos. instituted May 23, 1778, died about Aug. 1784.

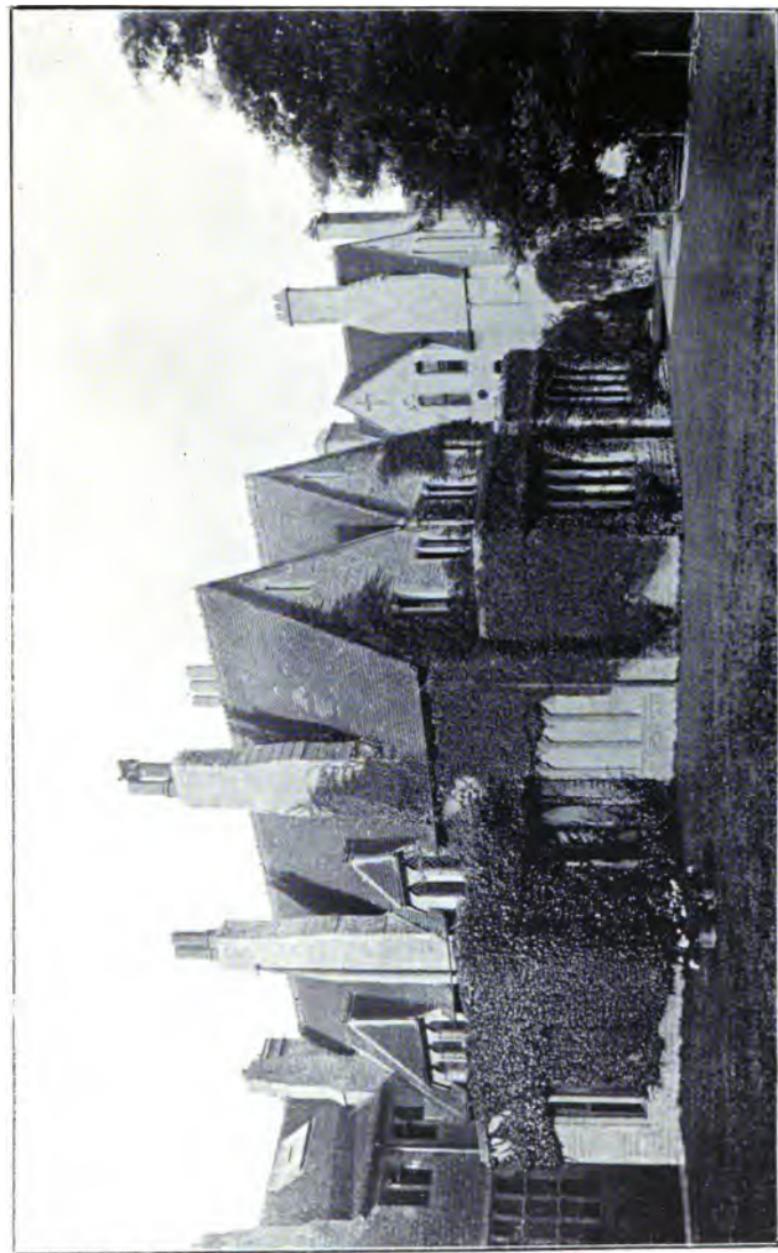
SHAW, Rev. Edward, instituted Sept. 20 1784, buried Feb. 4, 1828.

HOBARD, Rev. Hon. Henry Lewis, D.D., instituted June 18, 1828, died (?).

BUTLER, Rev. Wm. John, instituted Aug. 15, 1846. Founder and Warden of the Community of St. Mary the Virgin, Canon of Worcester, Sept., 1880; Dean of Lincoln about June 11, 1885; born Feb. 10, 1818, died Jan. 14, 1894.

HOUBLON, Rev. Canon, Thos. Henry Archer, instituted Rector of Peasemore, July 20, 1875, to Jan. 1881, instituted Vicar of Wantage Jan. 13, 1881.

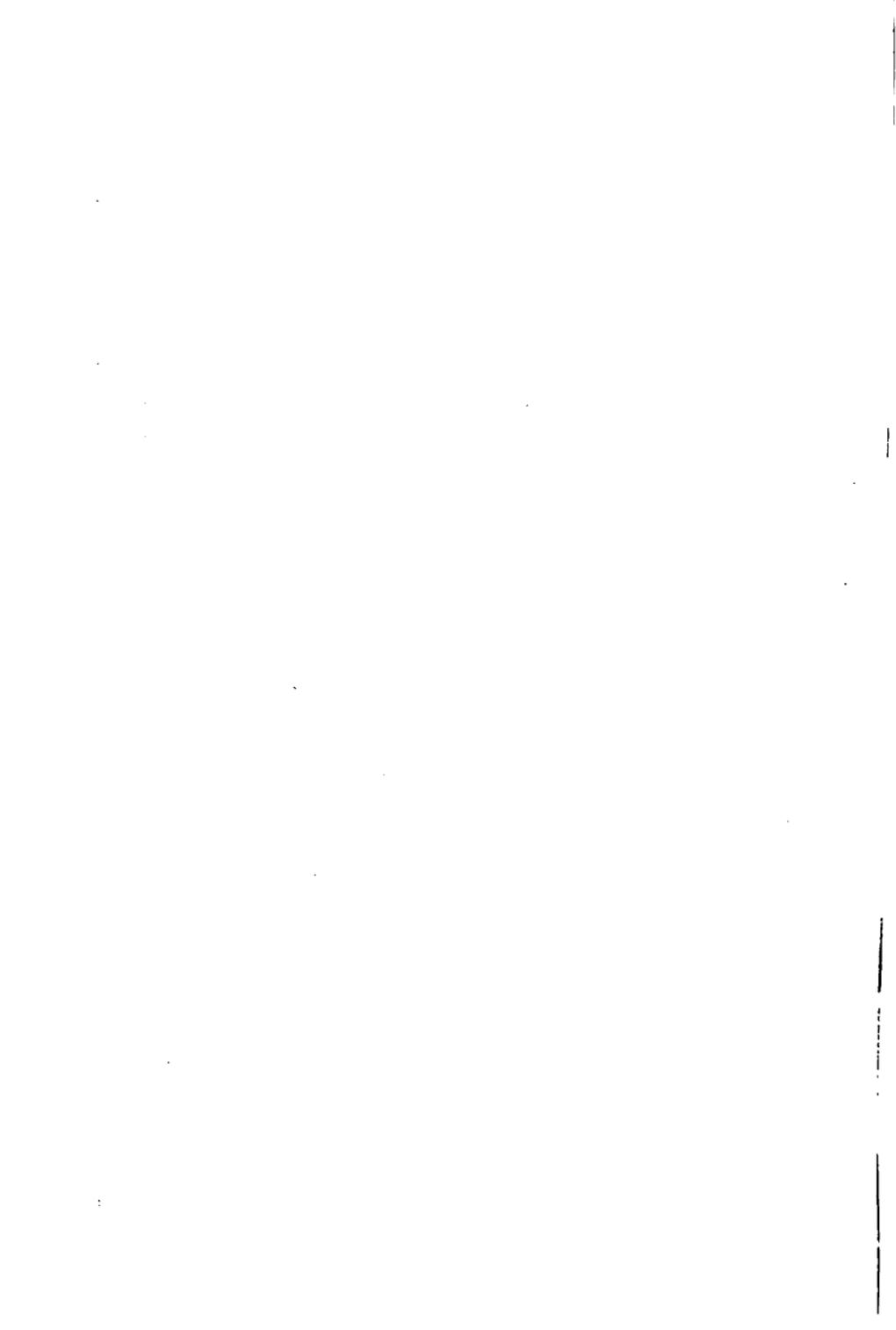
NOTE.—It seems likely that this Sir John Steyle, clerk, mentioned by Richard Bryges in his letter to Cromwell, on page 51, was a Vicar of Wantage, although this fact is not actually defined.



*Photo by]*

S. MARY'S HOME.

[*Tom Revelley, Wantage.*]



### THE SISTERHOOD OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN.

No record of Wantage would be complete without some account of this Sisterhood, by which so much has been done for the town of Wantage, and for many other parts of the country. In the year 1848, Mr. Butler (who had then been Vicar of Wantage for one year) was anxious to put into practical form his long-cherished idea, and to raise up a Community of Sisters, belonging to the Church of England, whose primary work should be that of education. Archdeacon Manning (better known as Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster) had already been in communication with him upon the subject of starting Penitentiary work in the Church of England; and Mr. Butler entered most heartily into the idea, and a house was soon opened with a view to carrying on this, which has always been, and is still, a foremost object in the work of the great Community of St. Mary the Virgin. Mr. Butler had seen for some time (and no doubt his year in Wantage had enabled him to still see more clearly) that the ignorance, the irreligion, and the utter callousness which characterised the rural districts of England, could only be combated by sound education, from a high moral and religious standpoint, in the schools. It was a stupendous work which Mr. Butler set himself to do, but one has only to read "Life and Letters of Dean Butler" to see how bravely and unflinchingly he worked, and how, beginning with only two Sisters, he persevered through well-nigh insurmountable difficulties and disappointments, till at last, in the year 1854, the foundation stone of St. Mary's Home was laid. During the last 50 years, the Community has been able to extend its works throughout the length and breadth of the land, and even to far-off India. Those who live in Wantage and

see these great works going on from year to year, before their eyes, can perhaps, by reason of their very familiarity with them, hardly estimate what a great power for good they are ; but many great Churchmen, and others well qualified to judge of these matters, testify to the enormous influence for good exercised by the Community by means of their schools, and other undertakings. Right nobly do they carry out the principles of the Saxon King Alfred, *to educate*, and with education, to give sound religious teaching. The principal works of the Community in Wantage are :—

1. *The Penitentiary* founded in 1850, where the following industries are carried on :

(a) Laundry work. (b) Plain needlework.

2.—*The School of Embroidery*—founded in 1862. It is the aim of the Sisters to carry out the idea of Messrs. Street and Butterfield, to revive the purest style of the Art of English Church Embroidery.

3.—*The Printing Press*. The chief work in this department is the printing of Church music.

#### EDUCATIONAL WORK.

*St. Mary's School* provides a thorough education based on Church principles, for the daughters of gentlemen, Clergy, and professional men.

*St. Katharine's School* provides a thorough practical education on religious lines, in accordance with the principles of the Church of England.

#### S. MICHAEL'S TRAINING SCHOOLS.

1.—*For Pupil Teachers*. The object of this school is to train pupil teachers, who are examined annually by H.M.S. Inspectors of Primary Schools and by the Diocesan. The

training in the practical work of their profession is carried on in the excellent National Schools of the Parish.

2.—*For Domestic Servants.* Here children from nine years of age and upwards are received, and after receiving a thorough education at the National Schools, are trained in the various departments of domestic work.

Besides these great works in Wantage, there are for Penitentiary, Rescue, and Preventive work.—

1.—A Penitentiary for Rescue and Preventive Work at Lostwithiel.

2.—St. James' Diocesan Home, Fulham Palace Road, S.W., for Penitentiary work.

3.—St. Mary Magdalene's Home, Ranelagh Road, Paddington, for Penitentiary work.

4.—The Peterborough Diocesan Home, S. Mary's Ketton, Stamford.

5.—The Lincoln Diocesan Home, Boston.

6.—St. Mary's, Narborough, Leicester.

7.—Spethorne St. Mary, Feltham, Middlesex. For inebriates.

8.—St. Helena's Home, Ealing Dean, W. For girls discharged from prison.

9.—St. Mary Magdalene's Refuge, Leicester. St. Anne's Preventive Home, Leicester.

10.—Bussage Diocesan House of Mercy, Stroud, Glos.

#### FOR HOME MISSION WORK.

1.—St. Peter's, Plymouth.

2.—St. Anne's, Paddington.

3.—St. John the Divine's, Kennington.

4.—St. John's Hostel, Calais Street, S.E. For aged and infirm women.

5.—All Saints', Wigan.

- 6.—The Home of Rest, Lytham.
- 7.—St. Mark's, New Swindon.
- 8.—St. Matthias, Earl's Court.
- 9.—Holy Rood, Worthing. The object of this Home is the care of chronic invalids and incurables.
- 10.—St. Andrew's Mission Home, Worthing.
- 11.—St. John the Baptist's Home of Rest, Broadstairs. To afford rest to busy persons, principally to young women engaged in business, and to pupil teachers in Elementary Schools.
- 12.—St. Leonard's Mission House, Beauchamp Charity, Newlands, Malvern Link. This consists of twenty-four Almshouses, with an infirmary and a choir school. Only those are admitted to the Charity who have been engaged in agriculture.

#### WORK IN INDIA.

##### THE PANCH HOWDS MISSION, POONA CITY, INDIA.

The Community was invited by Bishop Mylne to send Sisters to work in this Mission, and in 1877 the first Sisters were sent. In 1888 the women's portion of this Mission was moved from the Cantonment to the city. The principal building is the Convent; and there are also the following schools:—

- 1.—St. Michael's. An elementary and industrial school for Indian girls of the labouring class.
- 2.—St. Gabriel's. A training school for girls who desire to fit themselves for Teaching and other Mission Work.
- 3.—The School of the Epiphany. A boarding school for Indian girls of higher social rank than those already provided for.
- 4.—St. Pancras. A boarding school for little boys.

5.—Village Schools ; under the charge of native Christian teachers.

6.—The School of Embroidery.

7.—St. Elisabeth's Creche. For homeless and destitute children, who when old enough are passed into the Mission House.

8.—Poona Cantonment. St. Mary's High School and Infant School. For English and Eurasian girls.

9.—The Sassoon Hospital.

#### THE NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

In the year 1850, when Mr. Butler had been in Wantage barely four years, he had collected a sufficient sum to purchase a site and build that large block of buildings, the National Schools in Back Street, which were opened on the very day upon which the foundation stone of the Grammar School was laid. For over 50 years these schools have been voluntary supported, and under the excellent staff of teachers, many of them trained at St. Michael's Training College, have done good work in the parish. In 1884 the new Boys' School was opened, as it was found that there was not sufficient room in the Back Street premises.

#### THE HISTORY OF THE BAPTIST COMMUNITY IN WANTAGE.

About the middle of the seventeenth century there was considerable religious persecution in Wantage. It seems to have been chiefly directed against the Baptists, who were first established in Wantage about the year 1642. Their first pastor was a Mr. Robert Keate, who, in the words of an old Church Book, "suffered much, as is reported for nonconformity, being imprisoned once, and threatened once, but remained valiant for the cause he was engaged in, though obliged to worship God privately, having no stated place for

worship except in a dwelling house for a long time after. There was in ye times of persecution a meeting of ye members of this church at a place near Grove to worship God according to ye dictates of their consciences."

Evidently about the year 1653 their meetings had been stopped, for on June 4th of that year we find among the Orders of the Council of State:—

"Order on the petition of the Church of Christ at Wantage and Grove, Co. Berks, that liberty be given to those congregations to meet respectively in the Town Hall of Wantage, and the village house at Grove at such times as they may think fit, for the exercise of religion, when the said places are not made use of for the keeping of Courts, or for other necessary services, unless cause be shown to the contrary, by the parties concerned in these places within twenty days of receiving this order. 'The people are to forbear exercising in the said houses till twenty days shall have expired.'

But the following year a fresh order became necessary thus:—

Domestic State Papers, October, 1654.

Petition of Major Francis Allen on behalf of the Church of Wantage and Grove, Berks, to the Protector.

"Notwithstanding a Council of State order of June 4th, 1653, Mr. Holt, now member for Abingdon, ordered Robert Clement, his Bailiff, to prohibit those congregations from meeting at Wantage Town Hall, begs liberty for them to do so."

Statement by Robert Keate and fourteen other inhabitants of Wantage.

"That being straitened for a room to assemble to wait upon the Lord, they petitioned and obtained Wantage Town Hall, but a new Steward has locked it against them, though

they never injured place or person, and though it is only wanted at certain times for Courts, and that not on the days when they meet."

Wantage, 15th day of 8th month, 1654.

This second petition seems to have been effective for no further complaints are recorded.

After the meetings in the Town Hall were discontinued, an old dilapidated barn, on the site of the Garston Lane Chapel was used by the Baptists as their place of worship. Between the years 1662 and 1667 the persecutions were again very severe against the Nonconformists; but in 1682 Robert Style (the founder of Styles' Almhouses), a wealthy bulb merchant, who had left Holland to escape religious persecution, made his home at Wantage, and gave £500 to purchase the old barn used as a chapel, and the freehold site of the burial ground in Garston Lane\* adjoining, and in the purchase of a farm at Inkpen, which has ever since been held by a succession of trustees; the income derived going to the support of the ministers and repairs of the chapel. In the year 1771 the old Presbyterian chapel † which was on the north side of Back Street was taken over by the Baptists, and for many years the two Chapels were used by them for Divine Worship. In 1858 Zion Chapel in Mill Street was built by some of the strict communion Baptists, and here they still continue to hold services, but without any settled pastors. In November, 1860, the present Chapel in Mill Street was opened by the Baptists. It con-

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\* There is an unwritten record that John Bunyan, the author of "Pilgrim's Progress," once preached in the old Garston Lane Chapel.

† This Chapel is supposed to be the one in which Bishop Butler worshipped. It stood on property owned by the Butler family, and is supposed to have been built by some of their ancestors.

tains a handsome oak pulpit once belonging to the Parish Church.

#### THE WESLEYAN COMMUNITY IN WANTAGE.

About the year 1827 the members of the Wesleyan body, who, up till this time had only held open-air meetings in Wantage, succeeded in erecting a Chapel at the lower end of Little Lane. From that time their work has greatly extended in the town, as the fine chapel in Newbury Street with minister's house and day school attached, bear ample witness to.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE CHARITIES OF WANTAGE.

(Contributed by William Clarke Jotcham, M.A.)

It has been considered that a few facts and details concerning the Town Charities, both ancient and modern, would be of interest to the readers of this volume, and would serve to perpetuate a grateful remembrance of those who have passed away and have bestowed a portion of their worldly possessions upon the poor and infirm of our small community, and perhaps also to stimulate others to follow their worthy examples. Some of these benefactors have lived in far distant periods. Their names indeed have been forgotten but their benefits have, except in a few instances, been preserved to us unimpaired. Other benefactors have lived in later days, and written records, both private and public, which have been kindly placed at the writer's disposal, have fortunately rescued their names and the exact particulars of their charities from oblivion. Others again have lived in quite recent years whose memories are fresh in the minds of the present generation, and whose benefactions are consequently clothed with a personal interest which perhaps does not attach to the more ancient gifts reaching back into the ages. It is impossible not to lament that present day conditions have obliged the administrators of many of the charities to depart in some measure from the strict terms of

the gifts. Testators have in certain instances named some particular day or days, especially sacred to them from family associations or other causes, on which doles of bread, clothing or coal, to be purchased out of their charities, were to be received by the poor and deserving; and in other cases directions have been left for a wide and general distribution. The fall in rents and dividends, the improved condition of the poor, and various economic considerations have contributed to influence the Trustees in confining the administration of the charity funds within the narrower compass in which they now lie. Abuses may have existed in the far distant past in regard to certain of these charities, as will hereafter appear, but none have been known within living memory, and it needs no Act of Parliament or controlling authority now to secure an honest and judicious dealing with these monies which have been consecrated by their givers to pious uses for ever. Unfortunately the condition of the capital funds of the older charities is none too prosperous, and if any generously disposed person of to-day should think fit to add one more name to the roll of benefactors of our native town and to help the resources of one or other of the excellent and useful trust bodies which will be found mentioned below, he or she may do so in the full assurance that the gift would be a welcome one, and would be administered with the most zealous care and discrimination.

The most interesting record relating to the **TOWN LANDS** is an Act of Parliament passed in the 39th year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1597). The Act has been translated, and is given in full elsewhere, but the main points are stated here as an introduction to the history of the Trust, which stands first in importance of the **Town Charities**. The statute com-

mences by reciting that various lands had, during the reigns of Heny VI. and Henry VII., been granted to certain inhabitants of Wantage upon trust to employ the income thereof for good and charitable purposes. This the Trustees appear to have done for a time, applying the income towards the relief of the poor, amending the highways, and maintaining a Schoolmaster, but in course of time the conduct of the charity came into the hands of individuals whose method of disposing of the trust property was not exemplary, and the Act states they made gifts of the lands to their children and kindred "to the great prejudice of the poor and needy and to the evil example of others," and it accordingly provided that in future there should be twelve inhabitants who should be denominated The Governors of the Town Lands of Wantage, and should be invested with the necessary legal powers of dealing with the Charity funds. The Governors were to be a body politic in deed and in name, and were to have a Common Seal. Twelve gentlemen were nominated to be the first Governors, and as a vacancy occurred it was to be filled up by the continuing Governors electing "one other of the better sort of the inhabitants." The Act proceeded to vest in these twelve Governors the lands which had been given by the various donors, and directed that the income should be applied yearly towards the relief of the poor people of Wantage, for amending the highways of the town and parish, and for maintaining a Schoolmaster to teach grammar in the town. After mentioning the fact that numerous leases of the charity lands had been made, the greater part of them to the friends children and kindred of the "unjust stewards" before mentioned, and reserving either very small rents or none at all, it was enacted that the Chancellor should direct

a Commission, of which the then Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas was to be a member, to enquire into all the leases in existence and to allow them or disallow them as should be deemed just. Notice was to be given fourteen days beforehand of the sittings of the Commission by proclamation in the market of Wantage, calling upon all the lessees of the charity lands to attend before the Commission in order to prove their leases. The Act limited the duration of all future leases to twenty-one years or three lives, at rents not less in amount than had formerly been customary, and the same to be paid yearly. The Governors were also to render accounts every three years to the Bishop of Salisbury for the time being. In this way the affairs of the Town Lands Charity were placed upon a sound and satisfactory footing, and the abuses which had existed were swept away, as it is hoped, for ever. The Governors' accounts have been regularly kept, with the exception of about thirty years during the middle of the 17th century, and they appear to have once only been audited by a Bishop of Salisbury. A most important item in the Trust was, until recently, the maintenance of the Schools of Wantage. The origin of these Schools cannot be ascertained, but certain returns of 1786 refer to a gift of one Mary Herbert who left by will the sum of £100 for a School. The first Grammar School of which we have any authentic record was a small ancient building, formerly a Chapel, situate on the south side of the Church-yard and having a Norman arch at the north entrance. The School, which appears to have been founded by the Act of 1597 before mentioned, and at which only classics were taught, was divided into two stories, the lower forming the Schoolroom, and the upper containing some small apart-

ments for books, etc. The study of the classics seems to have had small charms for the Wantage youth of that period, as in 1832, when the Head Master, the Reverend Daniel Robins, retired, there was but one scholar on the foundation. The Master's salary was only £30 per annum. This was hardly "a living wage" as we should consider it now, but the cause of Mr. Robins' retirement was ill-health. The Governors receiving no further applications for admission to the School, turned their attention to the other schools in the town, of which they then had the management. These were the English Boys' School and the English Girls' School, presided over respectively by Mr. Butler and Mrs. Painter. The Boys' School had been established some twenty-two years, and was also situate in the Churchyard; and the Governors decided on raising the Master's salary from £15 15s. to £20 per annum. The following curious extract from the Report of the Commissioners appointed at the end of the reign of King William IV. to enquire into the various charities in England and Wales will serve to acquaint our readers with the nature of the education which the boys received: "The boys are taught reading, particularly in the Testament, writing and arithmetic, and some few of the elder boys have lately been taught English Grammar. They generally go through the 'Rule of Three' and some into 'Practice.' The Governors pay £3 a year for copy books for them." To this School the Governors sent twenty-four boys, the Baptist Minister sent eight or nine boys, who were paid for by a Baptist charity which is more particularly mentioned hereafter, and the Schoolmaster was allowed the privilege of taking private pupils. To the Girls' School, the Governors sent eighteen girls. The Mistress was allowed to receive private pupils, and her salary, on the closing

of the old Grammar School, was raised from ten guineas to fifteen guineas per annum. The girls were taught "reading, spelling, needlework, and knitting," by the order of the Governors, and several in addition learnt "writing and arithmetic," which were "paid for by themselves." On the 29th July 1850, National Schools, built by public subscription, were opened, and these, in conjunction with a Wesleyan School re-opened a few years afterwards, took the place of the Old Boys and Girls Schools. Early in 1850 a committee was formed with a view to the erection of a memorial of the thousandth anniversary of the birth of King Alfred, and resulted in a proposal to revive the Grammar School by subscription in augmentation of the limited fund then at the Governors' disposal. The efforts of the committee were entirely successful, and on the last Monday in July 1850 the corner stone of the new buildings was laid by Mr. Bartholomew Wroughton, of Woolley Park. Appropriate prayers were offered by the Bishop of the Diocese, and the ceremony was attended by Archdeacon Berens, the Rev. William John Butler, then Vicar of Wantage, and a large concourse of the clergy, gentry, and inhabitants of the neighbourhood. Mr. J. B. Clacy, of Reading, was the architect, and the work was entrusted to Messrs. Hunt and Kent, of Wantage. The buildings were constructed of Cirencester stone, with Bath stone quoins and dressings, the style adopted being the first period of pointed architecture prevailing in the 13th century, and were arranged round three sides of a quadrangle. The School occupied the West side; the dining hall, kitchen, offices, and dormitory the North; and the residence for the Head Master the East. The old Norman doorway was removed from the School in the Churchyard,

and was used for the entrance to the new Schoolroom, where it still does duty. In their appeal for subscriptions the Governors expressed their anxiety "to revive their Grammar School and to provide for the middle classes of their neighbourhood a cheap and efficient course of instruction, embracing not only a rudimentary acquaintance with the Latin language, but also the necessary addition of a sound modern education."

In 1872 the present large Schoolroom was built by Messrs. John Wheeler and William Gregory of Wantage, from designs prepared by the late Mr. Butterfield, at the north end of the School playground, and the playground itself was enclosed by a substantial stone wall. The cost was defrayed out of a loan of £1000 from the Charity Commissioners which has since been repaid. Soon afterwards the Head Master's residence, together with the dormitories and other buildings, was considerably enlarged with money raised by public subscription, the result of the energy and enterprise of the Head Master, Mr. Henry Cook, and of his wife, aided by the generosity of Lord Overstone, who came forward with a handsome donation of £1,000.

In 1897 new science buildings were erected, including a laboratory and workshops fitted with every modern appliance. The architect was Mr. A. Mardon Mowbray, of Oxford, and the contractors were Messrs. Benfield and Loxley, also of Oxford. The cost of the new buildings and fittings, which just exceeded £1,500, was raised by a grant from the Berkshire County Council of £800, by donations from Lord and Lady Wantage of upwards of £450, and by subscriptions from the School Governors and others. The School had previously severed its connection with the Town Lands

Charity in the month of November 1893, which witnessed the completion of a Management Scheme prepared by the Charity Commissioners. The School is now governed by this Scheme, of which the principal features are as follows : *The introduction of a representative element into the governing body.* Of its thirteen members, three are elected by the Vestry of Wantage, five by the Town Lands Governors, three by the Berks County Council, and the remaining three are co-optative Governors. *The inclusion of the usual conscience clause.* *The establishment of free Scholarships with revised regulations.* These Scholarships entitle the holders to exemption from the payment of Tuition fees, and are to be maintained at the rate of one Scholarship for every ten boys in the School, and are only to be given as the reward of merit on the results of examinations. Five Scholarships are awarded at the discretion of the Governors, and in the award of the other five a preference must be given to boys who are and have for not less than three years been scholars in some Public Elementary School or Schools in the town of Wantage, and who are not less than ten nor more than twelve years of age, and *the School Curriculum*, which includes Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, Geography and History, English Grammar, Composition and Literature, Mathematics, Latin, at least one modern foreign European language, Natural Science, Drawing, Vocal Music, Drill, or other physical exercises.

Both the Town Lands and the Grammar School Charities (now separated as before stated) are administered free of all expense other than actual out-of-pocket payments. As regards the Town Lands, the Governors occupy the office of Treasurer in rotation, and are responsible for the accounts

and the ordering of repairs and the like, being assisted by an Honorary Clerk. An endowment fund of £200 per annum is paid by the Town Lands Governors to the School Governors, whose accounts are kept by an Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer combined. The board of School Governors is constituted as follows:—

*Co-optative Governors*—Lord Wantage, K.C.B., V.C., (since deceased), Mr. Edward Ormond, and Mr. Llewellyn Jotcham.

*Appointed by the Governors of the Wantage Town Lands*—Mr. Henry Denis de Vitré, Canon Archer Houbllon, Mr. Maurice Wheeler, Mr. Thomas Gilbert Emerson, M.D., and Mr. Henry Norman Nichols.

*Appointed by the Vestry of Wantage*—Mr. Thomas Clark, Mr. John William Kent, and Mr. William Jackson.

*Appointed by the Berkshire County Council*—Mr. William Hew Dunn, of Hungerford; Mr. Philip Wroughton, of Woolley Park; and Colonel Charles Grove Edwards, of Faringdon.

The Head Masters of the School since its re-establishment have been as follows:—The Reverend Edmund John Smith, M.A., of Worcester College, Oxford, 1851 to 1856; The Reverend Cornelius Hargrave Crooke, B.A., of St. John's College, Cambridge, 1856 to 1868; Mr. Henry Cook, 1868 to 1884. Under Mr. Cook the school reached its highest point of prosperity. He was educated abroad, and came to Wantage after upwards of seventeen years' experience under the Reverend J. Penrose, of Exmouth, the Head of one of the best preparatory schools in the West of England. Mr. Cook's attributes were enthusiasm for his work, energy, abundant knowledge, with power to impart it, and great strength of character. These were brought into play at the Grammar

School during his long head-mastership, and bore ample fruit. The new buildings which were erected during this notable period have been mentioned, and a well-merited recognition of the labours of Mr. Cook and of his wife in connection with them has been placed on record. The remaining three Head Masters have governed the school in quite recent days, and it is only necessary to speak of them briefly :—The Reverend William Pace Rigg, M.A., of Pembroke College, Cambridge, late second Head Master of St. John's School, Leatherhead, 1884 to 1893; the late Mr. Edmund James Piggott, M.A., of Lincoln College, Oxford, and afterwards L.L.D. of Dublin University, 1893 to 1897 ; and Mr. Frank Shervill, M.A., (appointed in 1897), late Scholar and Mathematical Honoursman of St. Peter's College, Cambridge, and late Head Master of King James I. School, Bishop Auckland.

The relief of poor persons now occupies the chief share of the attention of the Town Lands Governors in the administration of their Trust. The Trust properties applicable to the housing of Almsfolk formerly consisted of one Alms Court in Newbury Street, with seven Almshouses, and another Alms Court in Mill Street, with six Almshouses, the gift of benefactors whose names are unfortunately not now ascertainable. The Governors maintained the inmates of both sets of Almshouses from the income of the Charity, the balance being distributed in the form of doles of bread, money, and clothing. The records of past years show that great care was expended in the giving away of these doles, of which some particulars are appended :—Out-Pensioners were selected at the annual meeting of the Governors held at Christmas, and were generally widows of sixty years of age

and upwards. They received 20s., 15s., or 10s. each per quarter at the Governors' discretion, and averaged about sixty in number. Cloth and calico were distributed generally about the beginning of the summer to provide the poor with clothing for the harvest—the average number of families supplied being about three hundred. Six great coats were presented to poor people whose work lay chiefly out-of-doors; each Governor residing in Wantage gave one coat. About thirty-eight quarters of bread were distributed weekly from a list of the most deserving objects in the town, made out by the Governors, and gifts were also made to the casually distressed by order of three Governors. A time came when the old Almshouses, which had fulfilled their mission for a great number of years, fell into a hopeless state of dilapidation and were unfit for habitation, and the Governors, in the exercise of their discretion, abolished the distribution of doles, and out of the accumulation of income thus saved erected eighteen new Almshouses—ten in Eagles Close, or Foundry Street, built in 1867, and eight in Mill Street, built in 1868, 1870, and 1871. The inmates of these houses receive in weekly payments out of the present income of the Town Lands Trust some £215 per annum. The Treasurer for the time being possesses the privilege of filling any Almshouses which may fall vacant during his year of office. One of the rules which regulate the tenancy of the Almshouses is worthy to be set out at length. It runs as follows:—"It is expected that the Houses and Gardens will be kept in good order, and that the Tenants will look upon them as God's gift to enable them to pass their declining days in freedom from anxiety and earthly cares, and to prepare to meet Him in Eternity."

The Architect of the Almshouses in Eagles Close was Mr. Edwin Dolby, and the Contractor was Mr. Thomas, of Abingdon. The Architect of the Mill Street tenements was Mr. Spencer, of North Shields, and the Contractors were Messrs. John Wheeler and William Gregory, of Wantage.

No part of the Town Lands Trust is now or has for many years past been applied towards amending the Highways of the Town and neighbourhood, but in 1830 about £21 was expended in paving a road to the Church.

The properties vested in the Town Lands Trust include:—

LANDS AND HOUSES left by donors unknown prior to 1786, and situate at Wantage, Stanford, East Challow, Charlton, Grove, East Hanney, and Steventon. The rentals, which formerly amounted to nearly £1000 per annum, have now, in consequence of the agricultural depression, sunk to £540 per annum.

MASEMORE'S CHARITY, representing the interest on £100 bequeathed by the will of William Masemore, to be applied for the benefit of the poor.

WILLIS' CHARITY, comprising seven acres and a yard of common land, derived under the will of Thomas Willis, the income to be applied in providing bread for the poor every Sunday after Divine Service, and including 20s. per annum to the Vicar of the parish for preaching two sermons in the afternoons of the Sunday before Holy Thursday and the Sunday before All Saints' Day.

PAYNE'S CHARITY.—Robert Payne, by deed dated in the 15th year of King James I., gave a Messuage, Orchard and yard in Newbury Street and Land in Wantage Field for the purpose of providing bread for poor, aged, and impotent people of Wantage, and for two sermons, the latter to be

preached on Christmas Day and Easter Day, and 13s. 4d. to be paid therefor. This sum is still paid.

**BROOKE'S CHARITY.**—By his Will in 1677 Thomas Brooke gave a rent-charge of £10 per annum, issuing out of land, called Black Crofts, in Wantage, to the town-born poor. The money was formerly distributed to those qualified to receive it in the severest part of the winter, in sums varying from 6d. to 2s., and separate accounts were kept in respect of it; but the rent-charge now forms part of the general income of the Town Lands Trust.

A sum of £325 16s. 9d., Consols representing the capital of **WHITFIELD'S CHARITY**. In May 1831 Mrs. Sarah Whitfield gave to Mr. Robert Pumfrey of Wantage, a sum of £100, in September of the same year a similar sum, and at her death in 1832 another £100, for the use of the old Almshouses in Newbury Street before mentioned, to be applied in the manner Mr. Pumfrey might think best. The income of these three sums was divided by Mr. Pumfrey monthly among the inmates of the old Almshouses, 2s. 6d. going to each of the inmates, and the balance being given to them at Christmas for a dinner. The Charity Commissioners, upon being applied to for permission to use the capital of the fund in the building of the new Almshouses, considered that the terms of the gift conferred upon Mr. Pumfrey a personal discretion, and that the method of distribution which he adopted bound the fund so that the dividends were thenceforth to be for ever applied to the like objects. The Commissioners accordingly refused the application, and the capital sum of Consols has since been transferred into the names of the Official Trustees of Charity funds, and the dividends form part of the general income of the Trust.

WILLIAM CLESS, of Wantage, Coach Master, who died in 1845, gave by will to the Governors £400 3 per cent. Consolidated Bank Annuities (reduced owing to an insufficiency of assets to £392 Consols) upon trust from the dividends to distribute yearly £5 for charitable purposes in Wantage on the first Tuesday before Easter, and £5 in coal among the poor of Wantage, on the 12th January (being his wedding day) the overplus, if any, to be given to the Parish Clerk and Sexton of Wantage, in equal shares. These dividends now form part of the general income of the Town Lands Trust.

MRS. MARY BURD, who died in 1871, bequeathed by her Will £2000 to be invested in Consols in the name of the Charity Commissioners, and directed that the dividends thereon should be paid to the Town Lands Governors every half-year, and by them equally distributed half-yearly for clothing and bedding amongst the inmates of the Governors' Almshouses in Eagles Close, their Almshouses in Mill Street, and the Churchwardens' Almshouses in Newbury Street. The trust fund is now represented by a sum of £2,165 1s. 10d. Consols.

By Deed of Gift dated the 25th July 1864, MR. RICHARD BELCHER, of Wantage, Gentleman, gave to the Town Governors a rent-charge of £3, charged upon property in Grove Street now consisting of cottages, but formerly comprising the "Cowheel Inn," and payable on the 1st February in every year. The Governors were directed to hand over the rent-charge to the Minister and Churchwardens for the time being of Wantage Church, who were to distribute the amount on St. Matthias' Day, as follows:—To the Minister for preaching a sermon, 15s.; to the parish Clerk,

3s.; to the parish Sexton, 2s.; to the parish Organist, 3s.; and to the parish Singers, 6s.; but should there be less than five singers then 1s. only was to be paid them per head. If any of the persons enumerated failed to attend, the allotted sum or sums were to be expended in bread and distributed amongst the poor who were members of the Established Church.

MR. ROBERT COWPER, of Reading, formerly a Governor, who died in 1867, bequeathed £200 to the Town Lands Trust.

The Governors hold a sum of Consols representing the purchase money of properties sold by them with the permission of the Charity Commissioners.

The Charities vested in the CHURCHWARDENS are as follows:—

ROBERT STYLES, who died in the year 1680, by his Will dated in the same year, left for the habitation of twelve poor men an Almshouse, and for their maintenance a Farm and Lands in the Parish of Andover, containing about 239 acres and called Dole's Farm. The Almshouses are situate on the western side of Newbury Street, built round a paved court, and of brick and tile. Each tenement consists of two rooms, and over the entrance doorway there is the following inscription—"The Gift of Mr. Robert Styles, of Amsterdam, Merchant, who died ye October 3rd, 1688. Deo et pauperibus." The income of the Farm, together with that arising from the other Charities entrusted to the Churchwardens, is paid to the inmates in weekly sums. Coals sometimes were allowed, but the only extra benefits which the funds will now permit of are dinners to the inmates at Christmas, and occasional gifts of woollen clothing.

**JOSEPH BELCHER'S CHARITY.**—By his Will, dated 15th July 1808, one Joseph Belcher gave to the Churchwardens of Wantage £1,000 3½ per cent. Bank Annuities on trust to receive the dividends and distribute the whole thereof weekly—between Michaelmas and Lady Day in every year—amongst the inmates of Styles' Almshouses in equal shares. The legacy duty reduced the amount of the bequest to £900, which is now invested in Consols.

**VIEL'S CHARITY.**—A sum of £100 was bequeathed by the Will of Mary Viel in 1821 to the trustees of Styles' Almshouses upon trust to distribute the dividends equally between the inmates of the Almshouses. The legacy duty and expenses reduced the bequest to £86, which is now invested in Consols. The Testatrix by a Codicil to her Will gave £19 19s. to the Vicar for the time being of Wantage, on trust to lay it out at interest, and apply the same in preserving her mother's monument; and she directed that if there should be any surplus interest to the amount of £3 it should be distributed on Christmas Day among such poor inhabitants of the parish of Wantage, members of the Church, as the Vicar should think deserving objects of charity. The £19 19s. was reduced to £18 12s. 6d., owing to a deficiency of assets, but the Legacy has since been considerably increased by accumulations of interest, and the present balance of upwards of £36 is deposited at interest in the Wantage Post Office Savings Bank in the names of the Vicar and Churchwardens.

**WILLIS' CHARITY.**—Thomas Willis at some time prior to 1786 devised by his Will land for maintaining the poor in Styles' Almshouses. No documents of title have ever been heard of, but a piece of land of about 5a. or. 12p. in Chain

Hill, and another piece of about three roods in Charlton are supposed to be the property devised. A portion of this Charity, consisting of an ancient Messuage on the West side of the Market Place, bounded on the North by the "Bell Inn" and on the South by property of Mr. Wells, was sold by the Churchwardens to Mr. Robert Sansum in January 1860, with the permission of the Charity Commissioners, and the purchase money, £130, was, and is still, invested in £137 4s. 1d. Consols.

**FETTIPLACE'S CHARITY.**—By his Will in 1720, Alexander Fettiplace gave the interest of £20 for the purpose of providing bread for the poor. The £20 was laid out in repairs to Styles' Almshouses, for which they were charged with the payment of £1 per annum which was regularly received by the Churchwardens until 1826, and was distributed in bread, but the payment has now ceased.

**BREAD MONEY.**—A donor unknown, sometime before 1786, gave a yearly rent-charge of 10s., payable out of land at Denchworth to the Overseers, which was expended in bread and distributed amongst the poor generally up to Lady Day 1832, but the rent-charge is not now paid.

**NEWBURY MONEY.**—A payment of £2 a year, called "Newbury money," which seems to have been first made as far back as 1683, is regularly paid by the Churchwardens of Newbury, and is distributed by the Minister and Churchwardens of Wantage, at Easter, in bread amongst the poor of Wantage and Charlton.

**MARRIOTT'S CHARITY.**—From an entry in an ancient Wantage Parish Register book the following gift appears:—"Mr. John Marriott, in his Will, 20s. per annum for ever to buy three Bibles every year to be given to the poor people

of Wantage about Easter; one to be given by the Vicar of Wantage, another by the Churchwardens, and the third by Geoffrey Masemore, his executors or assigns; the overplus of the said 20s. to be given to the Schoolmasters." This interesting Charity has unfortunately lapsed.

MISS HARRIET FLOYD, late of Wantage, who died in 1856, gave by her Will to the Vicar and Churchwardens of Wantage the sum of £50 3*1*/<sub>4</sub> per cent. Annuities free of duty, upon trust to distribute the dividends thereof amongst such of the deserving poor of Wantage as they should deem fit, for ever.

MRS. CAROLINE SMART, who died in 1876, bequeathed by her Will to the Churchwardens of Wantage, the sum of £100 upon trust to invest the same and to expend out of the annual income thereof as much as might be requisite in repairing the tomb of her late husband, William Smart, and to expend all the surplus annual income thereof in the purchase of bread, which she directed should be distributed amongst the poor of Wantage. The Legacy duty reduced the bequest to £90, which is now represented by a sum of £94 17s. 2d., Consols.

MRS. JEMIMA CAUDWELL, who died in 1894, bequeathed by her Will to the Churchwardens £400, free of Legacy duty, upon trust to invest the same, and to apply the annual income thereof for the benefit of the inmates of Styles' Almshouses. The fund is now represented by a sum of £389 10s. 9d., Consols.

The following is a Nonconformist Charity: — JOSEPH TOMKINS by his Will in 1753 gave to Robert Dowsett a sum of money sufficient to purchase £100 South Sea Stock upon trust to apply the dividends thereof in teaching poor children

of Wantage, Charlton, or Grove, whose parents could not afford to have them taught, "to read a chapter in the Bible and New Testament perfectly well." On Robert Dowsett's death the Testator's son, William Tompkins, and his heirs in their turn were to be Trustees, and to have the right to nominate children for this instruction, to the intent that the same might continue a perpetual charity. ROBERT DOWSETT by his own Will in 1770 bequeathed another £100 of South Sea Stock to his nephew, the before-mentioned William Tompkins, upon trust to apply the dividends in teaching such poor children of Wantage and Grove similarly circumstanced to read the English language, as his nephew should think proper objects. The dividends on the Charity Fund were handed over by William Tompkins to the Baptist Minister at Wantage who (as before mentioned) used them in sending eight boys to the old Grammar School and four girls to a school at Grove to be educated, there being no Nonconformist School in the town. The Charity was administered in this way by successive Baptist Ministers until the Wesleyan School was built. From this period the income of the Charity was paid over to the Wesleyan School authorities, who undertook the education of the objects of the Charity, these latter being nominated from time to time by the Baptist Minister and Deacons. This condition of affairs existed until the year 1900, when the Anstey family, who had held the Trust fund for a lengthened period, died out. The fund (£325 12s. 10d. Consols) was thereupon transferred into the names of the Official Trustees of Charitable Funds, and application was made to the Charity Commissioners for a scheme of administration. This scheme has been drafted but has not yet been agreed to in detail.

Its object appears to be to appoint Trustees with directions to apply the yearly income of the Charity towards the advancement of education, either in the way of prizes or rewards, or of payments to encourage continuance at school, to poor children of Wantage, Charlton or Grove. It is proposed that every sum awarded under the provisions of the Scheme be applied at the discretion of the Trustees in or towards paying the Tuition fees of the child or otherwise for his or her maintenance or benefit, or be deposited in a Savings Bank and allowed to accumulate for the child's benefit.

The following are modern Charities under separate management :—

**THE WANTAGE COTTAGE HOSPITAL.**—Mr. Percy Smith, of Letcombe Bassett, who died in 1883, by his Will, bequeathed to his trustees, his widow, Mrs. Susannah Smith, Mr. Llewellyn Jotcham and Mr. William Marlow a sum of £5000 “to be applied by them in the establishment and maintenance of a Cottage Hospital for the poor and sick inhabitants of Wantage and its neighbourhood, including particularly the township of East Hanney and the parish of Letcombe Bassett,” with power to make rules for the management and regulation of the hospital, but with a prohibition against applying any part of the bequest in the purchase of land. A newly erected and suitable house in Belmont was purchased by public subscription at a cost of upwards of £1000. It was furnished throughout by Mrs. Silver, of Letcomb Manor, in memory of her late father, Joseph Johnson Miles, Esq., and was opened for the reception of patients on the 1st February 1886. The institution is in the hands of a Committee of influential residents and is excellently conducted. Yearly reports are issued and disclose particulars of the work done.

**THE FIRTH PROVIDENT MEDICAL DISPENSARY.**—This was established under the Will of Mrs. Harriet Firth of Wantage, who was a sister of Mr. Percy Smith, the benefactor of the Cottage Hospital, and who died in 1885. She bequeathed by will to her trustees, Mr. Llewellyn Jotcham and Mrs. Porter, a sum of £2000 to be applied by them in or towards the establishment of a Medical Dispensary for the benefit of the poor and deserving inhabitants of Wantage and the neighbourhood, particularly including Letcombe Bassett; no part of the legacy was however to be spent on land or in building. A house is rented in Newbury Street, and is occupied by a book-keeper, who receives the applications for relief, and these are submitted in due course to the medical officers. Suitable rules have been drawn up for the good conduct of the institution, which provide that for merely nominal weekly payments the provident members (who consist of working persons and servants, their wives and children, not in receipt of parish relief, and being unable to pay for medical advice in the usual manner) may obtain the benefit of the dispensary. Patients too ill to attend in person are visited at their own homes. The accounts are kept and Committee meetings are called by a Lady Honorary Secretary. The income received from the endowment and from patients' payments is distributed among the medical officers at the end of the year in proportion to the number of families attended by them respectively. A yearly report is issued, and is sent to each member of the Institution.

## CHAPTER VIII.

(Contributed by Lt. Jotcham).

### LIST OF THE GOVERNORS OF THE WANTAGE TOWN LANDS *from the passing of the Act of 39 Elizabeth (1597)* *incorporating the Charity.*

It is believed that the following is a complete list of the Governors from the incorporation of the Charity down to the present time. Owing, however, to the imperfect way in which the earlier Minute Books were kept, coupled with the indistinctness and archaic character of the writing, the task of compilation has been rather an arduous one, and it is possible that some errors may have crept in, in particular it is suspected that in one or two instances names of Governors have been duplicated.

The dates prefixed to the names down to comparatively modern times are for the most part the dates when the several Governors are first found to be taking part in the business of the Charity, very few entries having been made in the earlier Minute Books of the deaths and appointments of Governors. The later dates shew when the Governors were elected.

1597. EDMUND FETTIPLACE, Esq., one of the original Governors appointed by the Act, was a member of the great family of Fettiplace, one of the most ancient and dis-

tinguished in the County. There were several branches of it settled in various parts of Berkshire and in Oxfordshire, and they held large estates in both counties. In Berkshire alone the Fettiplaces in their several branches held at different times upwards of thirty manors, besides rectories and other possessions. Edmund Fettiplace was one of the Childrey branch of the family, and lived there at the time of his appointment. He was afterwards knighted. William Fettiplace, presumably the grandfather of Edmund, founded a Chantry in Childrey Church, and endowed Queen's College, Oxford, with lands in Letcombe Bassett, Westcott, Sparsholt, Childrey, Grove, Uffington, and ten other parishes in the County, upon condition that the College should maintain an Almshouse which he had founded for three poor men of the parishes of Childrey and Letcombe Bassett. The Chantry Priest was also to receive an annual income and to keep a school for the poor children of the parish. Clarke in his "History of the Hundred of Wanting," traces the pedigree of the Childrey branch of the family from Sir Thomas Fettiplace, Sheriff of Berkshire and Oxfordshire, 14 Henry VI., who married Beatrice daughter of John I. King of Portugal, and widow of Thomas, Earl of Arundel, down to Richard Gorges Fettiplace who died in 1806 without issue. The ancient line of the Fettiplaces seems however to have settled in North Denchworth in 1263, 47 Henry III. Adam Fettiplace was Mayor of Oxford ten times, viz : in 1245, 1253 to 1260 and 1266-7, and he it was probably who purchased the Manor of North Denchworth, and was the first of the family to settle in Berkshire. The Fettiplaces were Knights of the Shire in the reigns of Edward I, Mary and Charles I, and Sheriffs of Berkshire in

the reigns of Henry VI, Henry VII, Henry VIII, Elizabeth, Charles I, and Charles II; and three of the Fettiplaces were on the Commission of the Peace in 1601. The family pedigree and arms were returned by the Heralds on their Visitations in 1566, 1623, and 1665. The whole family is now extinct.

**JOHN DOLMAN, Esq.** He was the owner of Frethornes Manor at Childrey, where he lived at the time of his appointment.

**FRANCIS MOORE, Esq.**, afterwards knighted, was a member of a family who lived at Fawley from the beginning of the reign of Edward IV to the year 1765, when the estate was sold to the Vansittarts, and by them to Bartholomew Tipping, Esq., afterwards mentioned. Richard Moore and Thomas Moore were Commissioners of the Land Tax in 1656, and the family pedigree and arms appear in the Heralds' Visitation of 1623. Sir Francis Moore was a great lawyer.

**THOMAS ALDWORTH**, is described in a contemporary deed of Trust as of the City of Bristol, merchant. No doubt, however, he possessed a residence in or near Wantage, as his son Thomas was also appointed a Governor, and he himself was described as of Wantage, merchant, in the Act of Parliament. He was a benefactor to the Charity. It is believed that descendants of this Governor are still in existence.

**ROBERT WIRDNAM OR WYRDNAME, Esq.**, of Charlton. He was in the Commission of the Peace in 1601. The Wirdnams or Wyrdnams became possessed of the Manor of Charlton in 1558, and held the Manor of Priors' Hold in Wantage in the reigns of Queens Mary and Elizabeth. Their pedigree and arms are shown in the Heralds' Visitations of 1623 and 1665. It is believed that the family is now extinct.

**WILLIAM TALBOTTE.** There is an interesting brass of three figures in the south aisle of Wantage Church to the memory of Water (? Walter) Talbot, and his two wives, Agnes and Aly, the first of whom died in 1525, and underneath are the figures of, presumably, their five sons. It is probable that William Talbotte was one of the sons.

**WILLIAM ANGER, WILLIAM TUBB, RICHARD WEBB.** Probably some of the "better sort of the inhabitants" of Wantage of their day, but of whom nothing now seems to be known.

**THOMAS ALDWORTH** the younger, son of the above-mentioned Thomas Aldworth.

**THOMAS CLEMENT**, of Wantage. It is believed that descendants of this Governor are still living in the town.

**JOHN SNODHAM.**

1598. **WILLIAM WILMOT**, of Wantage, Gentleman. The Wilmots of Upper Lambourne, and afterwards of Charlton, were a family of considerable position in the County. Their pedigree and arms appear in the Heralds' Visitations of 1623 and 1665. William Wilmot died in 1618, and was buried in Wantage Church. A brass placed there to his memory seems to have disappeared.

1599. **THOMAS GROVE**, Esq., of Grove. This family, who derived their name from what was then the Hamlet of Grove in the parish of Wantage, became possessed of the Manor soon after the dissolution, and several of them lie buried in the south aisle of Wantage Church. The family became extinct on the death of Francis Grove of Stanwell, Middlesex, in 1805.

1611. **SIR ROBERT HYDE**, Knight, of Charlton, second son of William Hyde of South Denchworth, M.P. for the

County in the reign of Queen Mary. The Hydes were settled at Hanney, circa 1220, and became possessed of the Manor of South Denchworth in 1383. They seem however to have lived at Denchworth before 1135, as the death of John Hyde in the last year of Henry I. is recorded in an ancient Missal supposed to have been in use in the Church at that period. The Hydes are said to have built the Church at Denchworth. They continued to hold their estates and to reside in the village until 1617, when the Manor and estates were all sold by Sir George Hyde, K.B., elder brother of Sir Robert, to Sir William Cockayne. Clarke traces their pedigree from Roger de la Hyde, 1220, to John Hyde, of Kingston Lisle, 1720, who was apparently the last heir male of the family. It is understood, however, that there is still in existence a family of Hyde who claim to represent the Hydes of South Denchworth. The pedigree and arms of Hyde of Letcombe, Hyde of Long Wittenham, and Hyde of South Denchworth (all members of the same family) appear in the Heralds' Visitations of 1566. Either from connection or dependance they bore precisely the same arms as the Fettiplace family. Part of the old Manor House of the Hydes at Denchworth, surrounded on three sides by a moat, is still standing.

1613. THOMAS WINTERBOURNE, of Grove, where he appears to have possessed an Estate called a Manor, but very little seems to be known of the Winterbourne family.

1616. GEORGE WYRDNAME, Esq., of Prior's Hold, son of the before mentioned Robert Wyrdname. He married the daughter of Bartholomew Tipping, Esq., of Oxfordshire, in 1623. The Wyrdname family became extinct in the male line about the middle of the 17th Century.

1616. THOMAS WEBB, of Charlton, Gentleman, apparently elected in the place of Richard Webb, one of the original Governors. This Thomas Webb was a party to a Governors' Trust Deed of 15 James I, conveying land at Challow.

NOTE. At about this time there seems to have been some irregular dealings with, if not actual misappropriation of some of the charity funds. The Trust Deed just alluded to recites that Mrs. Ann Latton of Latton Down, Thomas Aldworth, the first mentioned Governor of that name, and Alexander Carter of Shellingford, had bequeathed certain monies "towards the welfare of the poore," "for the purchase of land for the benefit of the poore," &c., which had "for many years been detained from the poore." However, the monies seem to have been recovered and were invested in the purchase of land at Challow. The unusual number of Governors appointed in the following year may have had some connection with these transactions.

1619. SIR GEORGE WILMOT, Knight, of Charlton, believed to have been a son of the William Wilmot before mentioned. He became possessed of the Manor of Charlton in 1623, and was Sheriff of Berkshire in 1627. He twice received Charles I at Charlton during the Civil War, on the first occasion in 1643, when the King was on his march to Oxford after having raised the siege of Gloucester, and on the second occasion in 1644, on the King's proceeding to Sir Robert Pye's house at Faringdon. Several members of the Wilmot family are buried in Wantage Church where monuments still exist to their memory. Local tradition points to an interesting old house with large oak panelled rooms of the period, just outside the Village and now used as a farm house, as the Manor house or part of the Manor

house in which Sir George received the King. A "Madam Wilmot" of Upper Lambourne, presented the Parish Church of Wantage with a large and very handsome alms dish in 1725, but the family is now supposed to be extinct.

1619. WILLIAM GROVE, Esq., of Grove, son of the Thomas Grove before mentioned.

1619. JOHN DANIELL.

1619. RICHARD TALBOTT, of Wantage, who may have been a son of Wm. Talbotte one of the original Governors.

1619. THOMAS ALDWORTH, of Wantage, another member of the Aldworth family.

1619. JOHN MARRIOTT. This Governor by his Will charged his house in the Market Place, Wantage, with the annual payment of 20/- for the purchase of three Bibles to be given away at Easter. The gift has however lapsed.

1628. EDWARD COTTRILL.

1630. WILLIAM TALBOTT, of Wantage, probably another son or a grandson of William Talbott the original Governor of that name.

1632. WILLIAM WYTHENS.

1634. FRANCIS SLADE. There was an old Yeoman family of this name living at Blewbury, but whether this Governor was one of them does not appear.

1634. EDWARD SAMUELL.

1638. JOHN FETTIPLACE, Esq., of Childrey, Sheriff of Berks 1630.

1639. EDWARD BLAGRAVE, Esq., believed to have been a member of one of the branches of the ancient family of Blagrave of Bulmershe and Calcott in this County. Anthony Blagrave was Sheriff in 1604, George Blagrave in 1700, Anthony Blagrave in 1713, and John Blagrave in 1762.

John Blagrave and Alexander Blagrave were Commissioners of the Land Tax in 1656. The pedigree and arms of Blagrave are entered in the Heralds' Visitations of 1623 and 1665, and their name without arms occurs in the Visitation of 1566. It does not appear where Edward Blagrave was residing at the time of his election as Governor.

1639. FRANCIS POOR.

1642. JOHN JENENS OR JENNINGS.

1656. JOHN FETTIPLACE, Esq., of Childrey. Sheriff of Berks 1668. He was created a Baronet in 1661, probably as a reward for his loyalty to Charles I, for which he was fined £1943, a very large sum in those days. Portions of the old Manor house at Childrey are still in existence, but have been incorporated into a modern residence. In one of the bedrooms of the old house communicating with a postern by a private staircase, Charles I slept on the night of the 1st April, 1644, on his march from Oxford to Marlborough.

1656. EDWARD KEAT, Esq., of Lockinge. The family of Keat is mentioned in the list of Berkshire Gentry returned into the Exchequer, 12 Henry IV, 1433. The Keats' settled at Lockinge in 1565, and became extinct in the male line on the death of Edward Keat in 1679, and in the female line on the death of Anne, his sole surviving daughter out of ten children. Anne Keat married Edmund Wiseman of Spersholt Court, and had an only child who died in his infancy. Monuments to the memory of Edward Keat and of certain other members of the Keat family are to be seen in Lockinge Church.

1656. LAWRENCE CASTLE.

1656. RICHARD BROOKE, of Wantage. One Thomas

Brooke, probably a son of Richard who was living in 1677, was a benefactor to the Charity.

1656. **WILLIAM MASEMORE**, the Younger, of Wantage. The Gallery which formerly stood at the west end of the Church was erected principally at his expense. He also gave to the Governors £100 to be invested in land, and £20 to be given away to the poor in one day. As this Governor issued tokens impressed with the arms of the Grocers, it may be presumed that he was a Grocer in a considerable way of business. He died in 1707.

1656. **RICHARD WINTERBOURNE**, of Grove, no doubt a descendant of Thomas Winterbourne previously mentioned.

1656. **THOMAS CLEMENT**, of Wantage, probably a son of the Thomas Clement also previously mentioned.

1658. **EDWARD BLAGRAVE**, a son of the Edward Blagrave before mentioned.

1663. **RICHARD LYSETT**, of Wantage. This family held a small estate in the parish, and a lane in the town is still called by their name.

1665. **GEORGE CHAMPION**, Esq., of Wantage. He was Clerk of the Peace for Berkshire in 1665. The Champions' were a branch of a Sussex and Surrey family and had a residence in the parish. Their pedigree and arms are returned in the Heralds' Visitations of 1623 and 1665.

1665. **HENRY MOORE**, Esq., of Fawley. One of his daughters married the celebrated Sir Matthew Hale.

1667. **ROBERT BROOKE**, of Wantage.

1667. **JOHN COLLINS**, Esq., of Betterton. The family of Collins of Betterton is one of long standing in the County. In the third year of Henry VI (1433) the Prior of Poughley (Chaddleworth) granted to John Collins a lease for 40 years

of the Manor and estate of Betterton. His descendants continued to hold the property as lessees in an unbroken succession down to the year 1879, when the then lessee, the Rev. John Ferdinando Collins (a later Governor) enfranchised it of the Dean and Canons of Westminster.\* On his death the Manor and estate were sold to Lord Wantage. John Collins married a daughter of Charles Fettiplace of Lambourne. He was a Commissioner of the Land Tax in 1656. The Heralds' Visitation of 1665 records three generations of the family of Collins of "Betterton in Locking," ending with John Collins 1664, but no arms are given. The present representative of the family is the Rev. John Ferdinando Collins, Vicar of Charlton with Brokenborough, near Malmesbury.

1667. JASPER SCHOLES OR SCOLES, Esq., of Charlton, connected by marriage with the Bathursts of Kent.

1667. JOEL POCOCKE, of Childrey. Dr. Edward Pococke, presumably an ancestor of Joel, was the Patron and Incumbent of Childrey in 1642. He was the first Arabic Professor at Oxford, and was afterwards Professor of Hebrew and Canon of Christ Church.

1670. RICHARD BROOKE, of Wantage.

1672. ELIAS CLARKE.

1672. WILLIAM HARDWICK.

1675. THOMAS BROOKE, of Wantage. A benefactor of the Charity.

1676. ALEXANDER FETTIPLACE, of Childrey, another member of the Childrey branch of the Fettiplace family.

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\* Poughley was dissolved by Wolsey and was given to the Abbot and Convent of Westminster, in exchange for 100 acres of what is now St. James's Park.

1680. EDMUND WISEMAN, Esq., of Lockinge, Sheriff of Berks 1685. The Wisemans coming from Thornham Hall in Suffolk settled in Berkshire in the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. One of the family was distinguished at the Battle of Agincourt (1415), and another at the Battle of Spurs (1514). Edmund Wiseman of Steventon was Sheriff in 1596, and was in the Commission of the Peace in 1601. His son, Sir Charles Wiseman of Spersholt Court, succeeded him as Sheriff in 1612. Edmund Wiseman, son of Sir Charles, was Sheriff in 1635, and his great grandson Edmund in 1699. The family pedigree and arms are returned in the Heralds' Visitations of 1623 and 1665. The family became extinct in the male line in 1713, and are now represented in the female line by Lieutenant General Wiseman-Clarke, C.B.

1680. ADAM BLANDY, Esq. He was the owner of an estate still called Blandy's at Letcombe Regis. The family of Blandy in their several branches is one of long standing in the County, their common ancestor being John Blandy of Letcombe Bassett who lived 1578—1654. John Blandy was Sheriff in 1690, another John Blandy in 1712, and another John Blandy in 1743. The Letcombe Regis branch of the family is now represented by William Frank Blandy of Reading, for many years Under-Sheriff of Berkshire.

1682. JOHN HASKINS.

1684. ARTHUR EVANS.

1684. HENRY KNAPP, of East Hanney, where he had an estate.

1685. GEOFFRY OR JEFFERY MAISMORE, of Wantage.

1686. DANIEL ALDWORTH, of Wantage, another member of the Aldworth family.

1688. THOMAS BUTLER, an opulent tradesman of the town, and father of the celebrated Joseph Butler, D.D., Bishop of Durham, Author of the "Analogy" and other standard works. Thomas Butler lived at the "Priory" at the time, and the room in which the Bishop is said to have been born is still shewn. Bishop Butler died unmarried in 1752.

1688. CHARLES COLLINS, Esq., of Betterton, and of the Middle Temple, London.

1691. JOHN HARDING.

1691. ELIAS CLARKE.

1691. WILLIAM MOORE, of Fawley.

1692. RICHARD LISSETT.

1694. JOHN LODER, Esq., of Hinton. He or his father was one of the Commissioners of Land Tax in 1656, and Sheriff of Berks in 1672. The Loder family became possessed of the Manor of Hinton, which had been previously held by Sir Henry Marten, father of Henry Marten the Regicide, in 1658. Before this they held the Manor of Princes Harwell, and lived at Balston Park, Berks, a Thomas Loder having married a daughter of Sir Thomas Raymond, of that place.

1696. CHARLES AMBROSE.

1698. GILES STAMP, of Wantage. There are monuments to several members of the Stamp family in the Parish Church. From the arms over the monuments this family appears to have been connected with the Stamps of Cholsey, whose pedigree and arms occur in the Heralds' Visitations, of 1566, 1623, and 1665. They had an estate in the parish but nothing is known of them there prior to 1698 or after 1790.

1698. JOHN WIGHTWICKE.

1699. **GREGORY GEERING.** One of the Geerings of South Denchworth. The Manor of South Denchworth was purchased by this family of Viscount Cullen, in about 1660, and was sold by them in 1758 to Worcester College, Oxford. Gregory Geering was Sheriff in 1711. In 1693 he built the study over the porch of Denchworth Church, which he and the then Vicar and Richard Brewster of London, filled with about 120 volumes of books, principally on divinity, for the use of successive Vicars. The books were attached by long chains to the cases, and most of them are still to be seen, but others, and those by far the most valuable, have disappeared.

1700. **THOMAS P . . . . (illegible).**

1701. **SIR RICHARD MOORE, Bart., of Fawley.** Another member of the Moore family previously mentioned.

1704. **PETLEY PRICE, Esq., of East Challow.** The Prices' must have been a family of considerable standing in the County, but nothing now seems to be known of them.

1707. **CHARLES LODER, Esq., of Hinton,** a son of the John Loder previously mentioned.

1709. **THE REVEREND JOHN BIRCH.** Believed to have been a Curate in charge of the parish at the time of his election.

1711. **ALEXANDER BOOTE, of Lyford.** His father, William Boote, married Mary, daughter of William Dunn, Esq., who was connected by marriage with the Yates' of Charney and Lyford. By his marriage William Boote became possessed of the estate at Lyford, which had belonged to William Dunn and before him to the Yates'. A blue marble slab in the centre of the nave of West Hanney Church bears an inscription to his memory.

1712. **GEORGE FETTIPLACE, of Childrey,** who continued in office till 1728. Although the Fettiplace family did not

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become extinct until 1806, and Alexander Fettiplace was a benefactor to the Wantage Charities in 1730, George Fettiplace was the last of his race who became a Governor of the Wantage Town Lands.

1721. THOMAS PINNOR.

1722. RICHARD ACTON.

1723. FRANCIS LODER. Another of the Loders' of Hinton. This family is extinct in the male line, but is now represented in the female line by Captain Loder-Symonds of Hinton Manor.

1723. BARTHOLOMEW TIPPING, Esq., of Woolley Park. Sheriff of Berks in 1691. The pedigree and arms of Tipping appear in the Heralds' Visitations of 1623 and 1665. They were originally an Oxfordshire family and settled at Woolley in 1566. The Manor of Woolley which had belonged to the Abbey of the Minories in London, was granted in 1540 to Richard Tate, who sold it to John Read and Margaret his wife who conveyed it in 1566 to Thomas Tipping and Bartholomew his son.

1723. SIR RICHARD FRANCIS MOORE, Baronet, son of the before mentioned Francis Moore. He returned his estate in 1715 as of the value of £714 11s. 4d. per annum, and that of Lady Jane Anastasia Moore at £100 per annum.

1725. FRANCIS WHITE.

1725. ROBERT PINNOCK, JUNR.

1726. JOHN PRICE, Esq., of the Ham. Sheriff of Berks in 1752. The Ham was the residence connected with the Manor of Priors-Hold, of which John Price was then the owner. A Priory of Black Nuns existed at the "Hamme" as early as the reign of King John, and the name of Priors-

Hold seems to imply that the Manor belonged to a religious house.

1728. THOMAS BREWER, of Wantage, Solicitor.

1729. HENRY KNAPP.

1730. JOHN BANCE.

1730. ROBERT BUTLER, R.N. He had an estate called a Manor in Grove, which he purchased previously to 1747. He went down with his ship in a storm off one of the West India Islands some years after his appointment as Governor.

1732. WILLIAM STANLEY.

1734. WILLIAM BIRCH.

1738. BARTHOLOMEW TIPPING, Esq., of Woolley Park. He died a comparatively young man in 1757.

1738. SIR JOHN MOORE, Baronet, of Fawley, who succeeded to the Baronetcy on the death of his brother Sir Richard Moore.

1740. CHARLES MALET.

1742. CHARLES PRICE, Esq., of East Challow. Sheriff of Berks in 1775.

1743. THOMAS GOODLAKE, Esq., of Letcombe Regis. The Goodlakes were a family of ancient standing in the County and were settled in Letcombe Regis in 1546. For a long period they "farmed" (i.e. leased) the Manor of Letcombe Regis (which a thousand years ago belonged to King Alfred the Great), from the Dean and Canons of Windsor. The Manor was afterwards enfranchised and now belongs to S. W. Silver, Esq., a present Governor. The Goodlake family became extinct in the male line on the death of Thomas Leinster Goodlake, Esq., of Wadley House, in 1893.

1743. THOMAS MILLS, Esq., probably of Wadley House, near Faringdon, whose granddaughter and sole heiress married the Thomas Goodlake just mentioned.

1746. EDWARD TOWSEY, of Wantage. The Towseys were people of some position in the town, where they owned property. Edward Towsey married a daughter of Gregory Geering of South Denchworth. There is a memorial tablet to his memory on the outside wall of the south aisle of the Church.

1750. WILLIAM STIRLING, of Wantage, Solicitor. He purchased the Manor of Wantage-Brian in 1752, and built the house now known as "Stirlings." In 1822 it became the property of the Butlers of Inkpen and Woolstone, and afterwards passed to Mr. Charles Hammond, a subsequent Governor. "Stirlings" now belongs to the representatives of the late Mrs. Brooks, a niece of Mr. Hammond, who occupied it for many years. The ancient stocks belonging to the Manor are still in existence and were until a short time since standing in the grounds of "Stirlings" on the opposite side of the road.

1750. THOMAS GARRARD.

1750. ROBERT BUTLER, believed to have been a son of the last mentioned Robert Butler.

1755. THE REVEREND DR. SAUNDERS, of whom nothing is known. He was probably Curate in charge of the parish at the time of his appointment.

1755. JOHN HIPPISLEY, Esq., of Lambourne. Sheriff of Berks in 1763.

1756. BARTHOLOMEW TIPPING, Esq., of Woolley. Sheriff in 1797, son of the Bartholomew Tipping previously mentioned. He died without issue, leaving his niece Mary Ann Musgrave, daughter of his only sister Catherine, who married

Dr. Chordin Musgrave, Provost of Oriel College, Oxford, his sole heiress. She married her cousin, the Reverend Philip Wroughton, a later Governor, whereupon the estate passed into the Wroughton family now represented by Philip Wroughton, Esq., late M.P. for Berkshire and a present Governor, and who notwithstanding a change of name is the direct representative of the Tipping family.

1756. JOHN TYRRELL.

1756. JOSHUA PRICE, Esq.

1762. THOMAS GILES, Esq., an ancestor of the Worthington family.

1766. WILLIAM WISEMAN CLARKE, Esq., of Ardington. The Clarke family trace their descent from John Clerke, of Inkpen, whose name is included in the List of the Gentry of Berkshire returned into the Exchequer 12 Henry VI, 1433. They became possessed of the Manor of Ardington in or about the year 1485, and made it their principal residence until 1830, when the then owner sold the Manor and estates to Robert Vernon, Esq., founder of the Vernon Gallery. The whole is now the property of Lord Wantage. Edward Clarke, of Ardington, was in the Commission of the Peace in 1601. Sir Edward Clarke was Sheriff of Berks in the first year of the reign of Charles I and died in 1630. Edward Clarke was Sheriff in 1729. The pedigree and arms of the family were returned in the Heralds' Visitations of 1623 and 1665.

1768. THOMAS JUSTICE, Esq., of the Abbey, Sutton Courtney; connected by marriage with the Goodlakes of Letcombe Regis.

1768. JOHN GILES, probably a son of the Thomas Giles mentioned above.

1768. THOMAS BARNES.

1768. SIR RICHARD MOORE, Baronet, who resigned his appointment after the sale of the Fawley estate before mentioned.

1769. WILLIAM TOWSEY, of Wantage, son of Edward Towsey a former Governor. He bought the Manor of Spersholt Court of William Wiseman Clarke sometime before this date.

1775. THOMAS GOODLACE, Esq. of Letcombe Regis.

1775. JOHN ELDERIDGE.

1775. ROBERT GARRARD.

1778. ROBERT GRAHAM.

1784. THOMAS ANSELL, of Wantage. An opulent Tanner who carried on his business in what is now known as Tanner Street, so called from the tan pits formerly existing there.

1785. JOHN BUTLER.

1789. EDWARD THORNHILL.

1789. THE REVEREND EDWARD SHAW, Vicar of Wantage.

1790. WILLIAM PRICE, Esq., of Charlton.

1790. THE HONOURABLE W. CRAVEN, afterwards Lord Craven. The Craven family are descended from Sir William Craven, a London Merchant, and Lord Mayor in 1611. They had a seat at Sparsholt. Anthony Craven Esq., described as of Spersholt, was created a Baronet in 1661, but died without issue in 1670.

1790. FERDINANDO COLLINS, Esq., of Betterton.

1790. SAMUEL WORTHINGTON, Esq., of Belmont House, Wantage. The Worthington family were the owners of large estates in the parish, among others, Belmont House and the land adjoining, the Latton Down Estate (so called

after the Lattons of Chilton, former owners) and the Manor Farm Estate. Belmont House was pulled down many years ago.

1793. WILLIAM WISEMAN CLARKE, Esq., of Ardington, Sheriff of Berks in 1811.

1793. RICHARD TAYLOR, of Grove.

1795. WILLIAM BECKETT, a Solicitor of Wantage. He was Clerk to the Justices, and the owner of the house now called Beckett House. Mr. Beckett married twice. His daughter by the second marriage married Thomas Sargent, Esq., a present Governor and owner of Beckett House. The Becketts were an old Wiltshire family, and are now represented by William Beckett Turner, Esq.

1795. WILLIAM WISE. Postmaster of Wantage, son of William Wise a well-known local antiquary.

1799. THE REVEREND W. H. PRICE, Vicar of Farnborough.

1800. THE REVEREND PHILIP WROUGHTON, of Woolley Park. He married his cousin, Miss Musgrave, as previously mentioned in 1788, and thereupon became possessed of the Woolley Estates in her right.

1802. THOMAS WARMAN, of Wantage. He was the owner of property in the town, portions of which still bear his name.

1805. THOMAS GOODLAKE, Esq., of Letcombe Regis, son of the Thomas Goodlake before mentioned. He was the author of a Book on Coursing, and was for some years Chairman of the Berkshire Quarter Sessions.

1806. JOSEPH BELCHER, of Wantage. A generous benefactor to the poor of the town.

1809. WILLIAM ANSELL, of Wantage. A Tanner and a man of some importance in his day.

1812. THE REVEREND JOHN COLLINS. Another member of the family of Collins of Betterton. He purchased part of the Pinkmarsh Estate of Sir John Pollen, Bart.

1814. ATKINS EDWARD MARTIN ATKINS, Esq., of Kingstone Lisle. His father, Edward Martin Atkins, was Sheriff in 1793. The Manors of Kingstone Lisle, Fawler and Westcott came into the possession of this family in about the middle of the last century. Abraham Atkins, the purchaser, who was a Presbyterian, gave divers lands, &c., amounting in value to about £500 per annum, for the benefit of various Nonconformist congregations in Kingstone Lisle and other places. He also endowed a school for Nonconformists at Kingstone Lisle with £50 per annum.

1814. BARTHOLOMEW WROUGHTON, Esq., of Woolley Park. He died without issue in 1858, and was succeeded in the Woolley Estates by his brother and heir, Philip Wroughton, Esquire, of Ibstone House, Bucks.

1820. THE REVEREND WILLIAM HENRY PRICE, Vicar of Farnborough.

1820. ROBERT THOMAS.

1820. HENRY HIPPISLEY, Esq., of Lambourne Place.

1821. THOMAS JENNINGS, of the Priory, Wantage, where he carried on a large school. The buildings near, now converted into cottages, were used as dormitories for the boys.

1822. GEORGE BUTLER, Esq., of Woolstone. Another member of the Butler family. He had an estate in the parish and built the house now known as Stanford Place,

near Faringdon. He presented to Wantage Church the Portrait of Bishop Butler now hanging in the Vestry.

1823. JOHN WISE, son of the before mentioned William Wise.

1826. THE REVEREND CHARLES JENNINGS, Wantage. Curate in charge at this time.

1826. CAREW PACKER. A substantial tradesman of the town.

1827. SIR HENRY WILLIAM MARTIN, Baronet, of Lockinge Park. He was Lord of the Manor of Wantage, and became the owner of the Latton Down and White House Estates in the parish. Henry Marten, L.L.D., Lord of the Manor of Longworth, was on the Commission of the Peace for the County in 1601. He was knighted in that year and died in 1641, and was buried in Longworth Church. His eldest son and heir, Henry Marten was M.P. for the County in 1639—1641. He was one of the Regicides who signed the death warrant of Charles I, and was himself sentenced to death in the reign of Charles II; he was however reprieved, but was imprisoned for twenty years in Chepstow Castle where he died in 1681. Another member of the same family, Francis Marten, was Sheriff in 1674. Whether however these Martens were ancestors of Sir Henry does not clearly appear. It is believed that the family is now extinct.

1827. WILLIAM NELSON CLARKE, Esq., D.C.L., of Ardington. An eminent Antiquarian and Author of the "History of the Hundred of Wanting." The Manor and estate of Ardington which had been in the possession of the family, passing uninterruptedly from father to son for nearly 350 years, were sold by him in or about the year

1830 when the family left the County. The Clarkes in the direct line are now represented by Lieutenant General Wiseman-Clarke, C.B., who took the additional surname of Wiseman as representing in the female line the Wisemans of Spersholt Court previously mentioned.

1828. CHARLES HAMMOND, of Stirlings. His daughter and heiress married Mr. John Brooks, a Solicitor of the town, and on her death the property passed to her children the present owners.

1828. CHARLES LIDDIARD, a substantial tradesman of the town. He built the house now known as Orchard House.

1830. THE REVEREND WILLIAM BIRKETT. Curate in charge of the parish after the death of Mr. Shaw. Afterwards Vicar of Great Haseley, Oxon.

1831. CHARLES EYSTON, Esq., of Hendred. The Eyston family is a very ancient and remarkable one. They became possessed of the Manor of Arches in Hendred on the marriage of William Eyston to Isabel, grand-daughter and heiress of William Rawlin de Arches, about the latter end of the reign of Henry VI. From him the Manor has descended in an uninterrupted succession of male heirs to the present owner, John Joseph Eyston, Esq., who now resides on the estate inhabited by his ancestors for 500 years. The pedigree and arms of the Eyston family are entered in the Heralds' Visitations of 1566, 1623, and 1665. William Eyston was in the Commission of the Peace for Berkshire in 1601. Charles Eyston and Robert Eyston refusing to acknowledge the supremacy of the King in matters of religion (being Roman Catholics) were included in the list of Recusants in the County, who entered the value of their

estates for the purpose of being doubly taxed pursuant to the Act passed in 1715. The former returned his estate as of the value of £567 7s. 11d. per annum, and the latter his estate at £6 13s. 4d. per annum.

1831. WILLIAM SHIPPERY, of Childrey. He was a great benefactor to the Wesleyan Body at Childrey and elsewhere.

1832. WILLIAM TRINDER, of Wantage. He was the Lessee of the Great Tithes of Wantage and was buried in the Chancel of Wantage Church. The large east window in the Chancel was placed there to his memory.

1832. THE REVEREND JOHN VINEY BUTTON, for many years Curate in charge of Wantage.

1833. HENRY HAYWARD. He married the daughter of the Thomas Jennings before mentioned, and after carrying on the school at the Priory for some time he retired to Stirlings where he died.

1839. EDWIN MARTIN ATKINS, Esq., of Kingstone Lisle Park, son of the before mentioned Atkins Edward Martin Atkins.

1843. THE REVEREND JOHN FERDINANDO COLLINS, of Betterton. On his death in 1889 the Manor and estate were sold to Lord Wantage as previously mentioned, and the family have no longer any residence in the neighbourhood.

1843. WILLIAM BECKETT-TURNER, Esq., of Wantage, mentioned ante. His name was originally Beckett, but on becoming possessed of an estate in Wiltshire under the Will of a Mrs. Turner, he in compliance with a direction in the Will and by the authority of an Act of Parliament assumed the name of Turner in addition to his own.

1846. WILLIAM ORMOND, Esq., a widely known and

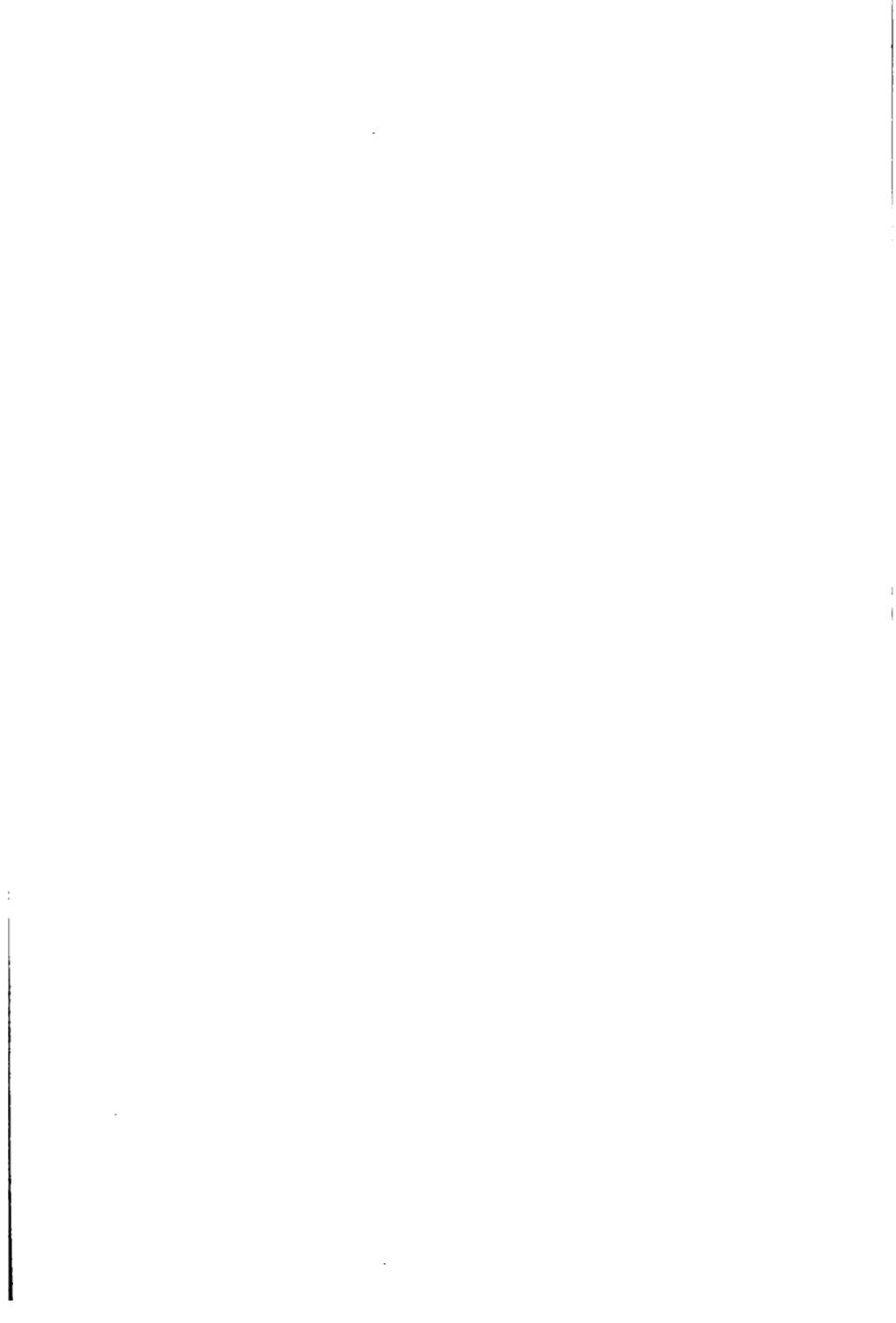


THE VERY REV. W. J. BUTLER, D.D., DEAN OF LINCOLN.

*Photo by]*

Died Jan. 14th, 1894.

[*Russell & Sons.*



greatly respected Solicitor of the town. He held a number of public offices, including that of Treasurer to the County for many years.

1847. THE REVEREND WILLIAM JOHN BUTLER, M.A., Vicar of Wantage and Honorary Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, afterwards successively Canon of Worcester and Dean of Lincoln, D.D. To him the Parishioners of Wantage owe the restoration of their Parish Church in 1857, and the westward extension of it in 1881. He established on a wider basis, if he was not the actual founder of the Sisterhood of St. Mary the Virgin and the Home for Penitents at Wantage, with their numerous branches at home and in India. He laid the foundation of the various educational establishments for girls, which have grown to such large proportions since his death. By his energy and ability he woke up the slumbering life of the town, and more than any other man for many generations helped to start it forward on a fresh career of improvement and prosperity. He fostered and encouraged every movement having for its object the religious, intellectual, or material improvement of the people, and it would be difficult to say in what numberless ways he helped onward the progress of the town. His reputation as a Parish Priest and organizer attracted to him the *élite* of the young clergy of the day, and men like Canon Liddon, Canon Newbolt, Canon Archer Houlton, Canon Woodward, and many others scarcely less widely known received their training under him at Wantage. He died in 1894, and was buried in the Cloisters of Lincoln Cathedral. The south chapel in the Parish Church was shortly afterwards restored and beautified to his memory.

1849. HENRY JAMES PALMER. One of the leading

tradesmen of the town, and for many years Town Treasurer.

1850. THE REVEREND WILLIAM HAYWARD. He was the owner of Charlton House, which on his death passed to his two nephews, the survivor of whom the Venerable Archdeacon Hayward is Canon Residentiary of Gloucester Cathedral. Charlton House and Grounds were afterwards sold to Henry Denis de Vitré, Esq., a present Governor.

1851. WILLIAM DOWELL WASBROUGH, Esq., Solicitor, of Stockham, Wantage. He was one of the Churchwardens of the parish for 28 years, and one of the Coroners of Berkshire from 1844 to 1879. He also held other important public offices. He was the owner of the Stockham Estate near the town, which since his death has been greatly added to by his only son William Butler Wasbrough, Esquire, a present Governor.

1852. ROBERT COWPER. A retired tradesman of the town, who resigned on removing to Reading where he died. He was a benefactor to the Charity.

1854. THE REVEREND DR. NELSON, of Sparsholt House. The Nelsons were originally a Lancashire family but were settled in the County in 1601. Thomas Nelson of Chaddleworth, was Sheriff in that year, and the family pedigree and arms are returned in the Heralds' Visitations of 1623 and 1665. The Nelsons were connected by marriage with the Clarkes of Ardington.

1854. BERNARD PUMFREY, of Wantage. He was the owner of considerable property in the town, which on his death passed to his only child, Mrs. Herbert, wife of the Rector of Shellingford.

1856. JOHN BOWLES, Esq., of Milton Hill. He died in



THE RIGHT HON. THE LORD WANTAGE, V.C., K.C.B.

Died June 10th, 1901.

[*Tom Revley, Wantage.*

*Photo by*



1884, and the family is now represented by Colonel Bowles of Streatley.

1856. GEORGE STONE, of the Ham, and previously of Fawley. He declined to act as Governor, and .

1857. JOHN PLUMBE, a Coal Merchant living at the Wharf, was elected in his stead.

1857. CHARLES JOHN EYSTON, Esq., of Hendred, son of the Charles Eyston before mentioned, a man of much learning and ability. He married Agnes, daughter of Michael Blount, Esq., of the ancient family of Blount of Mapledurham, and his second son, John Joseph Eyston, Esq., is now the owner of the Manor and estate.

1859. CAPTAIN LEICESTER VINEY VERNON, of Ardington House. Captain Vernon whose name was originally Smith, succeeded to the Ardington Estates on the death of Robert Vernon before mentioned. He was for some time one of the Members of Parliament for the County and on his death the Estates became the property of Lord Wantage by exchange with his representatives.

1860. COLONEL SIR ROBERT JAMES LOYD-LINDSAY, BARON WANTAGE OF LOCKINGE, V.C., K.C.B., whose death as these sheets are being prepared for the press has cast a gloom over the whole neighbourhood, was the second son of Lieut.-General James Lindsay (of Balcarres), grandson of the 7th Earl of Balcarres. He was born in 1832. In 1858 he married the Hon. Harriet Sarah Jones Loyd, the only child and heiress of Lord Overstone, and settled at Lockinge. In 1860 he was elected a Governor of the Wantage Town Lands and subsequently Chairman of the Governors of the Grammar School. It is impossible within the limit of this notice to give any adequate idea of the fullness of Lord

Wantage's life, or the great extent of the useful, patriotic and philanthropic labours in which he was engaged up to almost the moment of his death. The bare enumeration of the various important posts which he filled during his long and honourable career would alone fill the space at our disposal. But the outline of his career may be given in a few words. Lord Wantage began his career in the Army, entering the Scots Fusilier Guards in 1850, and serving throughout the Crimean War, where he obtained the Victoria Cross for gallant deeds at Alma and at Inkermann. His well-known defence of the Queen's Colours at Alma is commemorated in his last gift to the town of Wantage, the Victoria Cross Gallery Pictures. Shortly after his return from the Crimea he was appointed Equerry to the young Prince of Wales. After leaving the Army he entered Parliament in 1865, and sat for twenty years as Conservative Member for Berkshire, till he was raised to the Peerage in 1885. He was for fifteen years Lord Lieutenant of the County, and as such took the lead in county work and in all important county movements. He was closely connected with the Volunteer movement from its formation, as Colonel of the Royal Berks Volunteers, and subsequently as Brigadier-General of the Home Counties' Brigade. He filled the Office of Financial Secretary to the War Office from 1877 to 1880, and throughout his life maintained an active interest in all Army matters. He founded at the time of the Franco-German War, the English Red Cross Society, and personally organised and directed its work in many subsequent campaigns, including the present War in South Africa. These and numerous other public duties did not cause him to neglect work nearer home. He was

Chairman, and practically Manager, of a large commercial enterprise (started by a near relative of his), the London Electric Supply Corporation, which he steered successfully through many difficulties. And at his Berkshire home he was associated with almost all the useful undertakings of the neighbourhood, such as the Wantage Tramway Company, the Wantage Coffee House Company, King Alfred's School, the Wantage Cottage Hospital, the Town Reading Room, etc., etc. He was an active member of the Berks County Council, and President of the Reading College, in the Agricultural Department of which he took special interest. As a large landowner in Berkshire, and himself a farmer on an extensive scale, he took a deep and active interest in all matters relating to agriculture, and the welfare of agricultural labourers. He practically re-built most of the villages on his estate, besides promoting many and varied works of utility on his own property and in the County generally. Amid these many occupations, Lord Wantage did not forget the Town from which he took his title, and presented to it the noble statue of King Alfred the Great, by Count Gleichen, which adorns the Market Place. He bore the greater part of the cost of erecting the new Town Hall. He greatly assisted in building what was formerly the Corn Exchange, but which has now received the name of the Victoria Cross Gallery, to which he presented the collection of pictures already alluded to. He was a liberal contributor to the expense of building the new Science Schools attached to the Grammar School. He contributed a large portion of the capital necessary for the laying down of the Tramway to the Railway Station. He took over the Wantage Engineering Works on the retirement of Messrs. Robinson &

Auden out of consideration and for the benefit of the town, adding new and more convenient buildings, greatly increasing the size and capacity of those already in existence, and fitting up the whole with the newest and most improved machinery. In these and in other ways too numerous to mention, Lord Wantage helped forward the town. It would be difficult to describe the sorrow with which the news of Lord Wantage's death was received throughout the district. It is hardly too much to say that everyone of whatever position in life, for he was a friend alike of prince and peasant, regarded his loss as one personal to himself, and his memory will be held in grateful remembrance for generations to come, by those of the town and neighbourhood who will benefit by his thoughtful munificence. The present generation also will miss the charm of the interesting and impressive personality, of one who represented with combined dignity and simplicity, every side of the typical life of an English Nobleman and Soldier.

1860. EDWARD ORMOND, Solicitor, a present Governor.

1860. WALTER RICE HOWELL BARKER, F.R.C.S., of Wantage. He enjoyed a large practice in the town and neighbourhood for many years and was the owner of an estate at Challow.

1860. THOMAS BROWN, of Wantage. He was a member of an old and greatly respected yeoman family in Berkshire and built the large and handsome house known as Winslow House in Newbury Street.

1863. THE REVEREND THOMAS VINCENT. Curate of Wantage and Chaplain of St. Mary's Home, afterwards Vicar of Pusey.

1867. PHILIP WROUGHTON, Esq., of Woolley Park, son

of the Philip Wroughton previously mentioned, and a present Governor.

1871. **LLEWELLYN JOTCHAM**, Solicitor, one of the present Governors.

1871. **THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SAMUEL JONES-LOYD, BARON OVERSTONE**. His name is too well known to require any lengthened notice here. He was a man of great ability, wealth and influence, and was the head of the well-known and extensive Banking Firm of Jones, Loyd & Co. He was also an eminent financier, a leading authority on questions of currency, and the author of the Bank Charter Act of 1844. Lord Overstone was a large landowner, chiefly in the Midland Counties. He was a generous benefactor to the Grammar School and helped forward several improvements in the town of Wantage. On his death in 1883 without issue male the title became extinct.

1877. **PHILIP GIBBONS**, of Brooklands, Wantage. He was for many years senior partner in the firm of P. & H. P. Gibbons, the predecessors of the Wantage Engineering Company, Limited, and is mentioned by Lord Wantage in the preface to this volume. He was the owner of "Brooklands" in Newbury Street, and was the first representative of the town on the Berkshire County Council.

1879. **HENRY DENIS DE VITRE**, Esq., of Charlton House, a present Governor.

1881. **THE REVEREND THOMAS HENRY ARCHER HOUBLON**, M.A., Honorary Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, and Vicar of Wantage, a present Governor.

1885. **THOMAS SARGENT**, Esq., of Grove, a present Governor.

1885. STEPHEN WILLIAM SILVER, Esq., of Letcomb Manor, a present Governor.

1885. WILLIAM BUTLER WASBROUGH, Esq., of Stockham, a present Governor.

1890. THOMAS NALDER. Founder of the Engineering Works of Nalder & Nalder, Limited, at Challow. He was Vice-Chairman of the Urban District Council of the town.

1890. WILLIAM BROOKS REYNOLDS, Esq., of Challow Park, a present Governor.

1896. THOMAS GILBERT EMERSON, M.D., of Wantage, also a present Governor.

1899. ARTHUR SAMUEL FRANCIS ROBINSON, of Wantage. Connected for some years as partner with Mr. P. Gibbons, and afterwards with Mr. Auden, in the Engineering Works taken over by Lord Wantage, and previously taken over by Messrs. Robinson & Auden from Messrs. P. & H. P. Gibbons. He resigned on leaving the town in 1900.

1900. JAMES CLARKE, Esq., of Emerald Hill, Wantage, a present Governor.

1901. ARCHIE KIRKMAN LOYD, Esq., K.C., M.P., elected in the place of Lord Wantage.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE GEOLOGY OF WANTAGE.

There are no very ancient rocks near Wantage,—no coal measures, or red sandstone, or lias: nothing older than the Oolite (roe-stone) beds of limestone so largely quarried at Marcham, Shellingford, Frilford, &c., and the various beds which belong to the Cretaceous formation, including the Chalk proper, the Upper Greensand and the Gault clay. The lowest beds of the Cretaceous system, known as Neocomian or Lower Greensand, are not exposed nearer to Wantage than at a distance of eight to nine miles, namely at Faringdon, and especially at Little Coxwell where are large quarries (worked for 200 years), containing an absolutely unique assemblage of fossil sponges in marvellous preservation, shells, corals and sea-urchins, mixed up with bones and teeth of long extinct fishes and reptiles.\*

To students of the Cretaceous system, Wantage with its immediate neighbourhood is decidedly interesting; for, the entire series—the Wealden only excepted—is typically represented and in great part open for the extraction of

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\* The first writer to mention the Coxwell Sponge-Gravel pits is Llwyd, in 1698. He tells us he had collected fossils there (*e. Coxalensi sabuleto*) for fifteen years. His contemporary Dr. Woodward, Founder of the Woodwardian Museum at Cambridge, records that he picked up his "first fossil shell" on the 13th of January, 1689.

fossils. It is not too much to say that no part of the Chalk range from Wilts to Herts possesses more characteristic fossils than Berks, and no part of Berks so complete a series as has been and can be collected in and around Wantage.

Everywhere along the northern face of the Berkshire Downs are quarries of Upper Chalk, Hard Chalk and Chalk Marl. At a lower level are numerous sections of the Upper Greensand (Lockinge, Ardington, Westcot), with its two divisions of soft sands and "Firestone." The Gault clay covers the base of the above formations, and then, after a gap of five or six miles, we come to the lowest and oldest beds of the whole system, the celebrated Sponge Gravels of Little Coxwell.

There are three beds which well reward the fossil hunter, though of course too much must not be expected in one day's work, as Llwyd warned his readers.\* 1°, the Hard Chalk; 2°, the Upper Greensand; 3°, the Firestone.

1°. The Hard Chalk is thus described by W. Whitaker, F.G.S. "A thin but remarkably constant bed to which, on account of its hardness, I have given the name of "Chalk rock," forms a boundary between the Upper and Lower Chalk. It never contains flints, nor are any found below it, whilst a line of them often lies on its upper surface. It is much jointed, breaks with an even fracture, and rings when struck with the hammer." ("London Basin").

The more this Chalk rock is studied, the more striking are its peculiarities. It may be seven and in places ten to twelve feet in thickness, but nine-tenths of its fossils are

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\* "Monendum erit ne *unius diei* spatio ea se inventurum speraret quæ nobis longè pluris constabant temporis."

found in a seam that rarely exceeds three or four inches in depth. Above this thin line fossils are scarce and restricted to half-a-dozen kinds. Above, not a single Gasteropod has been discovered; but in the seam itself an extraordinary assemblage of Univalves is disclosed. Deep sea bivalves are present, but the majority of the fossils belong to the genera *Trochus*, *Cinulia*, and *Pleurotomaria*, with Hamites, Scaphites and Echinoderms, the most abundant of the last named being a dwarf species known as *Cardiaster pygmæus*.

2º. The second most attractive formation is the Upper Greensand, which is well seen at Kingstone Lisle, West Lockinge, Ardington Field, and Hendred. Some few years ago, there was a small pit behind the Wantage Iron Foundry which was crowded with fossils and yielded fifty different species to two enthusiastic collectors, whose spoils may be seen in the Geological Museum at Oxford. It is to the belt of Upper Greensand that we owe the most picturesque parts of the hills and plateaus that rise above the Vale of White Horse,—Kingstone Lisle Park, Eastmanton, Lockinge Park and Milton Hill. It is to the Upper Greensand also, that we owe the springs and streams which start from beneath the Chalk and are marked by a succession of villages, such as Ashbury, Uffington, Childrey, the Letcombes, the Hundreds, and the Hagbournes.

3º. The third most interesting bed of the Cretaceous system is the Firestone resting on the Gault clay, and forming a prominent narrow ridge which overlooks and bounds the Vale of White Horse for many continuous miles. When the "Memoirs of the Geological Survey" were printed, no fossils were reported from the Firestone beds of the Upper Greensand, but when Sir R. Loyd-Lindsay (Lord Wantage)

opened quarries on the west side of Ardington field, some remarkable fossils were brought to light, among them being Echinoderms of the genus *Cardiaster*, three species of *Nautilus* and a few Bivalves.

A catalogue is annexed of the chief fossils of the Cretaceous formation as found near Wantage. The Lower Greensand fossils, although part of the same formation, are excluded from the list as outside the Wantage limits.

#### UPPER CHALK WITH FLINTS.

Localities: Workhouse Hill, Latton Down.

*Para moudra.*

*Spongia ramosa.*

*Spongia* (conical, as Jermyn St. Museum, xiii, 4/14).

*Cliona Mantelli.*

*Ocellaria impressa.*

*Ocellaria radiata.*

*Flustra inelegans* (Dixon's Sussex, xviii, B9).

*Stomatopora gracilis* (Woodward's Norfolk, iv. 16).

*Lunulites radiatus* ( " " , " , iv. 8).

*Diastopora.*

Coral (like sea-anemone) Etheridge.

*Pentacrinus* (Dixon, xix).

*Ananchytes ovatus.*

*Galerites pilula.*

*Micraster cor-anguinum.*

*Echinochonus conicus*, Wright.

" *subrotundus*, "

" *castaneus*, "

*Cidaris clavigera.*

*Terebratula carnea.*

" *semiglobosa.*

*Terebratulina gracilis.*

*Rhynchonella Cuvieri.*

*Plicatula sigillina.*

*Crania Parisiensis.*

*Spondylus spinosus.*

*Inoceramus Cuvieri.*

Teeth of *Lamna*.

#### CHALK ROCK.

Localities : Wantage and Charlton Downs, Cuckhamsley Hill, Letcombe Castle, Sparsholt Bushes.

*Caryophyllia laevigata*, Duncan, ix, 1.

*Monocarya (Parasmilia) centralis*, Dixon, xviii, 1.

*Isis tenuistriata*, Geinitz, Elb. 141.

*Homœsolena*, Etheridge.

*Asteria* (? *Goniaster*) Dixon, xxii.

*Salenia*, sp. Etheridge.

*Micraster cor-bovis*, Etheridge.

*Cardiaster pigmæus*.

*Ananchytes ovatus*.

*Serpula plexus*, Dixon, xxviii, 12.

*Serpula minuta*, Woodw. Norf. v, 12.

Ringed serpulite, n. sp. Etheridge (not *Serp. ann.* Dixon, xxix, 9).

*Terebratula carnea*.

„ *biplicata* and *semiglobosa*.

*Rhynchonella Cuvieri*.

„ *biplicata* and *plicatilis*.

*Crania Ignabergensis*, Römer, Geol. von Oberschl. xxiv, 4.

*Avellana incrassata*, Mantell, South Downs, xix, 3.

*Spondylus spinosus*, D'Orbigny, Pl. 461, 1.

Inoceramus Cuvieri, Mant.  
     ,, mytiloides, "  
 Cypricardium, Etheridge.  
 Plicatula sigillina.  
 Ostrea.  
 Natica Dupinii, Dixon, xxvii, 35.  
 Phasianella, Eth.  
 Pterocera, "  
 Pleurotomaria.  
 Solarium.  
 Turbo gemmatus, Dixon xxvii, 26, 33.  
 Teredo amphisbæna, Mant. S. D. xviii, 23.  
 Dentalium.  
 Ammonites Prosperianus, Dixon, xxvii, 22.  
 Scaphites æqualis,                  ,,     37.  
 Hamites (? angustus,                  ,,     xxix, 12).  
 Baculites baculoides.  
 Rhyncholite.  
 Teeth of Lamna,  
     ,,    Ptychodus decurrens,                  } Dixon, xxxi.  
     ,,    ,,    mammillaris,                  }  
 For the Chalk-Rock stratum consult Whitaker, Quart.  
 Jour. Geol. Soc. xvii, 16, and London Basin, 46, 572;  
 Saunders, Geol. Mag. iv, 157.

#### LOWER CHALK—CHALK MARL.

Localities: Wantage, Childrey, Lockinge, Betterton.  
 Branching Sponge.  
 Cristellaria rotulata, Dixon, xxvii, 19.  
 Salenia (? Cyphosoma spatuliferum, Dixon, xxiv, 28—31).  
 Holaster Trecensis, Leym. Wright.  
 Terebratula biplicata.

Terebratulina gracilis and striata.  
 Rhynchonella Mant.  
 Spirorbis—Spirolinites.  
 Avellana cassis.  
 Venericardia tenuicostata.  
 Inoceramus latus.  
 Lima læviuscula.  
 Pecten Beaveri and orbicularis.  
 Pleurotomaria persp. Mant. xxv. 17.  
 Cardium Ringmer,     ,,     ,,     5.  
 Plicatula inflata.  
 Pinna decussata, Dixon, xxiii, 20.

For the Chalk Marl consult Mantell's Works ; Dixon's Sussex and D'Orbigny's Terr. Crétacés.

#### UPPER GREENSAND.

##### A. SOFT SANDS.

Localities : Wantage, Lockinge Clump, Childrey, Westcot.

Stomatopora.  
 Monocarya centralis.  
 Discoidea subucus.  
 Cardiaster (? Toxaster).  
 Spines of Cidarite.  
 Serpulites.  
 Terebratula biplicata.  
 Terebratulina gracilis.  
 Rhynchonella Martini.  
 Plicatula spinosa.  
 Pecten quinquecostatus.  
 Astarte.  
 Mytilus.

**Cypricardium, Etheridge.**

**Cucullæa.**

**Pleurotomaria Rhodani.**

**Solarium.**

**Natica.**

**Trochus.**

**Dentalium.**

**Ostrea and Crania.**

#### B. FIRESTONE.

**Localities : Charlton Hill, Ardington, West Hendred.**

**Cardiaster, sp. Etheridge.**

**Hemiaster. sp. "**

**Holaster planus, "**

**Nautilus lœvigatus, Sharpe, Ceph. ii, 1.**

" **Largilliertianus, " " vi, 1.**

" **Deslongchamp, " " iii, 1.**

**Ammonite.**

**Hamite.**

**Arca, Lima, Pecten.**

**Pholadomya.**

#### GAULT.

**Locality : Ardington Wick.**

**Belemnites.**

**Ammonites.**

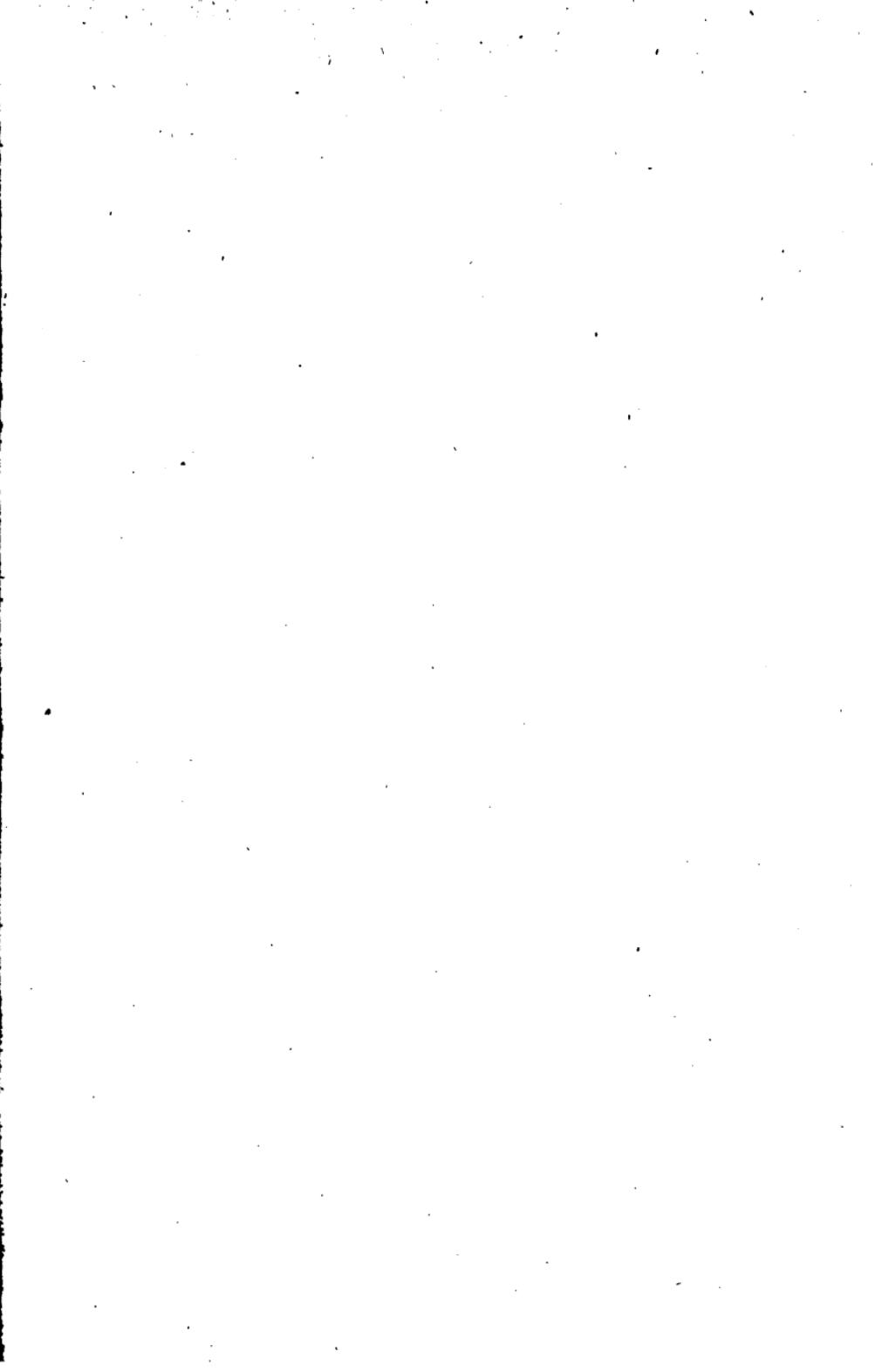
**Serpulites.**

**Solarium.**

**Teeth of Lamna.**

" " **Saurocephalus.**

**THE END.**





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